EQUIVOCAL AREAS IN CHAPLAIN MINISTERIAL COUNSELING ETHICS

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IN

CHAPLAIN/MINISTERIAL COUNSELING ETHICS

by

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INTRODUCTION

It is unnecesaary to reiterate here all of the influences that have made for moral and ethical confusion in our times. Probably not since the days when the Sophists permeated ancient Greece with their skepticism have men been so afflicted with uncertainty. The metamorphosis exhibited in our economic and social structures, the approbation of scientific method with fluctuations between the hypotheses of the logical conceptualists and the pragmatism of the radical empiricists, the cynicism bred of our world wars and police efforts, the intriguing and oft misunderstood mores and cultures of ever-closer foreign nations and powers, the worship of relativism and hedonism, and the popularization of a sophisticated semantics -- all have challenged the established "landmarks of human progress" and the perpetual blessings of Christianity which have been attained at such great sacrifice of life and effort and eliminated the distinguishing lines between moral and immoral, ethical and unethical. Our forms and modes of life changing at an unprecedented pace seemingly have brushed away the inhibitions of the past. The unfortunate substitute appears to be only doubts. Not merely the salutary doubts of scholarly and critical examination but the palling, frustrating and consternating incredulities that

come when one's bearings are out of focus and have been sublimated into inutility. Until recently, the answers of the church, and the pronouncements of its clergy were likely to be accepted as sufficient and fait accompli; now, the church gives evidence of having "lost the glory it once held so firmly in its hands".[1] Furthermore, if the clergy itself is not contaminated with the same uncertainties and misgivings of the laity, ecclesiastical declarations and conclusions are adjudged to be unauthoritative at the very best.

Against this picture of our present situation, what is the present status of the ethical counseling practices, as revealed by a sampling of a cross section of our clergy? Do they indicate explicitly and carefully considered convictions and well-defined ethical practices? Are certain ethical philosophies consistently employed or is there a prevalence of eclecticism? Will a cross section of Protestant clergymen reveal a solidarity or a divergence of opinion in their counseling ethics?

It might be assumed to raise the question of ethical practices in chaplain/ministerial counseling is a direct affront to the sincere servants of the Church. However, as ambassadors of Christ, the clergy are unique and their

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[1]Samuel R. Miller, The Life of the Church, p. 11.

constituents expect them to be unusually sensitive to the ethical and moral implications in all phases of life. The ministry is trusted to exemplify and interpret the ethical and moral codes for the individuals it is their privilege to serve. To complicate the "existential situation" even more the ministry almost automatically has foisted upon it a very close relationship with parishioners, who in turn rely upon their spiritual leaders for guidance and insight. "In the Judaeo-Christian tradition it is the religious leader who is commissioned to teach, counsel, and demonstrate how the values of life are to be upheld by an ethical religion. What the pastor does is even more decisive than what he says, and as the people expect of him an exemplary life, so will his conscience insist that his life show in practice the value of the Christian theory he offers."[1] As couriers of the "Good News" they must without exception "choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong and never be content with a half truth when the whole can be won".[2] It is imperative for the clergy, both collectively and individually, with eager hearts and determined intent to scrutinize their convictions and practices in order to discern whether they serve the influential minority as well as the

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[1]Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care, p. 282.

[2]Ivan L. Bennett, The Hymnal Army and Navy, p. 34.

articulate majority; whether they serve human need and eternal souls as well as personal advancement and acclaim; whether they enhance the church's temporal prestige and recognition or the eternal extension of the Kingdom of God; whether they please God as well as man.

Although a reply to the survey questionnaire required several hours of thoughtful time and effort, the percentage of voluntary returns lucidly indicated an intensive consideration and interest in ethics. Truly the men who are privileged to carry out the spiritual ministrations of our people are making conscientious endeavors to fulfill their varied missions in an impeccable and responsible fashion.

ETHICS: MEANING AND DEFINITION

An isolated number of the replies seemed to be troubled by the use of the term "ethics" and several indicated a distinct confusion as to its explicit meaning. Nevertheless, it has been noted that among Protestant scholars and theologians the terms "ethics" seems to be the most popular and satisfactory choice of terminology.

The English word ethics is derived from the Greek verb ἔθω, I am accustomed, and the noun ἔθος, custom, habit, usage, (Sanskrit, svadha, "self-determination"), which connotes individual peculiarity (Luke 22:39), as well as the individual customs of a person or a community. (Acts 6:14; Luke 1:9). "More exactly it is from the Ionic form of the word ἦθος. Ἦθος was used by Homer to designate the accustomed place where one could usually be found, then in the sense of habit, custom. Plato gave it new content: disposition, character, and in the same sense Aristotle spoke of ἡ ἐπιστήμη ἠθική as the science of character-building. While thus the meaning of the word approached consistently nearer to our present usage, yet we must not overlook the fact that both Plato and Aristotle used it in a purely formal, morally neutral sense, not necessarily involving a good disposition, a good character."[1]

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[1] Johann M. Reu and Paul H. Buehring, Christian Ethics, p. 1.

"Thenceforth the word was frequently used in Greek philosophy, especially by the Stoics. Later it occurs in the works of Melanchton and his pupils and then in Spinoza; while in recent times the term has been affected especially by Evangelical theologians."[1]

The word "morals" is derived from the Latin word mos, meaning, will, personal will, order, authority to be respected. When related to modus, it denotes order, both in the sense of command and of habit. (cf. mores et institutiones majorum). Accordingly, Cicero formed the adjective moralis, on the analogy of the Greek ἠθικός, in Aristotle's ἐπιστήμη ἠθική, so that according to him ethics and morals apparently are identical terms, and the latter as well as the former is an ethically neutral concept.

"Christian theological terminology adopted the phrase disciplina (or theologia) moralis in the sense defined by Cicero and Seneca. In Roman Catholic theology the term "morals" remained by far the more customary, but even in the older Protestant philosophy and theology it shared its honors with the rationalists and the followers of Kant, although it is also employed by theologians of altogether different schools."[2] However, some Protestant scholars have

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[1]Henry S. Nash, "Ethics", The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Vol. 4, p. 185.

[2]Idem.

favored the term "ethics" because of the use and emphasis given to "morals" by the previously mentioned schools of thought. With this brief background, we offer the following definition. Ethics is a normative science of the moral, that is, "particulars of right and wrong" as it is to be realized in the life of the individual and society as a whole.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS

The efforts to define and delimit the subject of Christian ethics have extended through the past twenty centuries with many different theses presented and even a greater diversity of emphasis. It has been designated "the science of Christian life", "moral theology" and "Christian morals". "The basic principle of Christian ethics is love; love which includes the elements of justice and mercy, righteousness and understanding, resolute action and responsibility. Since this is the basic principle Christian ethics is not legalistic; it is not just another set of rules or ideals. It includes ideals but goes further by considering the motives, intentions, and character of people. This is Christian ethics - love."[1] Newman Smyth asserted, "No simpler or better definition of Christian ethics could be given, namely, 'Let us learn to live according to

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[1]William A. Spurrier, Power for Action, p. 38.

Christianity', said Ignatius in the second century. Its subject matter is broad as human life; its object is to bring all materials of life under his supreme, formative principle, 'according to Christ'."[1] "The central ethical notion or category in Christian ethics is 'obedient love' - the sort of love the gospels describe as 'faith that works through love'."[2] Professors Beach and Niebuhr emphasize the same tenet, "Christian ethics says in many different ways that the Christian life consists in the response of obedient love to God in whatever he wills."[3] Sydney Cave summarizes his view in this way, "Christian ethics are derivative. Since God has so acted, what must we do?"[4] Gerald Smith approaches the topic in a popular manner when he states, "Christian ethics, like any system of ethics, seeks to define the highest good and to indicate how man may attain it. But the clue to the understanding of this is found in a vital relationship with Jesus whereby the Christian is enabled with more or less success to possess and to exhibit the spirit of Jesus in his behavior."[5]

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[1]Newman Smyth, Christian Ethics, p. 1.

[2]Paul Ramsey, Basic Christian Ethics, p. xi.

[3]Waldo Beach and H. Richard Neibuhr, Christian Ethics, p. 5.

[4]Sydney Cave, The Christian Way, p. 13.

[5]Gerald B. Smith, Principles of Christian Living, p. 8.

Speaking in a Christian frame of reference Canon Peter Green states, "Ethics is the Science of Conduct. Its object is to determine what conduct is right for man. Conduct, as that word is used in Ethics, may be defined as conscious and purposeful action, or action directed to an end."[1] "Essentially, my thesis is that Christian ethics is a description of man in his created goodness, his disrupted existence, and his participation in the New Being - all this from the point of view of his action toward other beings, himself, and the ground and aim of his being."[2] Dean Knudson feels "there is no place for both philosophical and Christian ethics. Christian ethics may be defined as the science or philosophy of Christian morality."[3] Cronin emphasizes that ethics is "the science of human conduct as according with human Reason and as directed by Reason towards man's final natural end," or, it is "the science - not merely an art - of moral good and evil in human acts."[4]

We wish to emphasize along with the scholars in the field "the first thing to be said concerning Christian ethics

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[1]Peter Green, The Problem of Right Conduct, p. 1.

[2]Charles W. Kegley and Robert W. Bretall, The Theology of Paul Tillich, p. 344.

[3]Albert C. Knudson, The Principles of Christian Ethics, p. 35.

[4]Michael Cronin, The Science of Ethics, p. 1.

is that it cannot be separated from its religious foundation."[1] Nevertheless, the fundamental questions for all ethics have intrigued the most astute thinkers since the beginnings of moral philosophy. These questions concern the necessity "to discover the basis of ethics, to display the meaning of the ethical Ought, and to establish the authority of the 'Categorical Imperative'. In other words, to find the answer to what is moral? What do you mean by Right and Wrong? What do you mean when you say that I ought to do right and to abstain from wrong? Why should not I disregard this ought, if I am prepared to take the consequences?"[2]

Although the systems outside of Christianity do not supply satisfactory answers to the above questions, the outstanding thinkers, especially those of the Greeks, have exerted a tremendous influence upon the ethical thinking of Christian theologians of all time. The influence of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle are very much with us today. Before we present the analysis of the survey on some specific equivocal ethical problem areas, we wish to consider the following postulates of Christian ethics.

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[1]Ramsey, p. 1.

[2]Green, p. 86.

PART I: THE POSTULATES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Christianity not only affirms that a God of all Creation exists, but it is most explicit concerning the kind of God in whom it believes and to whom it is so unswervingly loyal. "Whatever man knows of God he knows through God's own revelation of Himself either in the realm of nature or in the realm of grace, that is to say, either through God's work of creation and providence or through His Holy Book, the Bible."[1]

Materialism, for example, which denies the reality of the spirit and ignores the necessary distinction between matter and the powers of the intellect, looks upon the universe as indifferent to mankind and human interests. Various religions, as well as some of the replies, have represented the God of the universe as hostile to man, a strict autocrat and judge, who demands attention in order to be appeased. However, Christianity feels the personal, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient triune "God of Gods and Lord of lords"[2] is not inimical to his prime creature, but a God who is righteous and good and Himself is love.

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[1]John Theodore Mueller, Christian Dogmatics, p. 143.

[2]I Timothy 6:15.

"Although the entire world with all diligence has endeavored to ascertain what God is, what He has in mind and does, yet she has never been able to attain to the knowledge and understanding of any of these things. But in our Christian faith we have everything in richest measure, for in all of the works of His creation, in His redeeming love as revealed to us in Christ, and in the sanctifying powers of the Holy Spirit He has Himself revealed and opened the deepest abyss of His paternal heart and of His holy and indescribable love."[1]

In his elucidation of the invisible resources of the Church Dr. Samuel Miller in crystal-like clarity points out, "of all these resources none is like unto God. To Him we owe our existence, and all that is life for any of us. He holds the world in patient hands, yet not without judging it. He is the end for which all things strive, and in whom they will be fulfilled in the ultimate destiny of their history. He is the reality in whose light we see our own unreality; He is the love in whose grace we see our sin. He is both in life and beyond it. Without Him there is no life; with Him life is life eternal. He is our joy and peace."[2]

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[1]Triglot Concordia, The Large Catechism, p. 695.

[2]Miller, pp. 73-74.

According to Luther, love is not an attribute of God, but a designation of his essence. To this identity of God and love Luther gives expression in the words, "God is himself love and his nature is nothing but pure love; so that if one were to paint such a picture as would be pure love representing the divine nature as the furnace and burning point of that love which fills heaven and earth; and again if one could paint and make a likeness of love he would have to make a picture as would be neither an inanimate work nor human, indeed neither angelic nor heavenly, but God himself."[1]

This concept of God is not based simply upon reasoning and speculation concerning God's being, for it surpasses and exceeds the wisdom, and the powers of reason within man. Luther envisioned God as almighty love and righteousness revealed in Christ; he looked into the heart of Christ and there found the heart of God. "We could never attain to the knowledge of the grace and favor of the Father except through the Lord Christ, who is a mirror of the paternal heart, outside of whom we see nothing but an angry and terrible Judge."[2] According to Zwingli, God is known before Christ. He is the infinite unchangeable power of all

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[1]ad I John 4:16.

[2]Triglot Concordia, p. 695.

things, absolute causality. According to Calvin, God is the omnipotent will ruling the universe. According to Luther, God is the omnipotent will manifesting His love in Christ Jesus.

In the Bible God reveals His constraining love to us. A love which elicits a complete trust in Him, who has given so graciously of Himself. Furthermore, He has evinced the necessity for man to reciprocate this love if there is to be a complete and unified relationship between Himself and His creatures. For where there is no trust in God's love, but indifference, insouciance, and even defiance, God, if He is to remain faithful to His righteousness, justice and holy love, must punish those who persistently oppose and cut off themselves from the revelation of His love. "For I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those that hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."[1]

Luther, who so precisely extolled the magnanimous love of God just as precisely warns us in his explanations to the First Commandment and the Close of the Commandments that God "commands under penalty of eternal wrath" to honor and worship Him as the only true God. Again, "the Divine

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[1]Exodus 20:5

Majesty with great earnestness insists upon the commandments, is angry with, and punishes those who despise them." Again, "God threatens to punish all that transgress these commandments; therefore we should dread His wrath and not act contrary to these commandments". Luther concludes, "But He promises grace and every blessing to all that keep these commandments".[1] The same loving God who is so definite in indicating what He expects of man, namely, "You shall have no other gods before me",[2] and "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind",[3] even more decisively reveals to man His consuming love in Christ Jesus.

In Jesus Christians have found the revelation of the nature and character of God. "Jesus was the manifestation of the wisdom or the 'moral principle' of God. In Jesus there was a true discrimination of values. He was the revelation of what life ought to be and of perfect goodness. He viewed life sub specie aeternitatis. Whatever else and more the doctrine of the divinity of Christ means, it at least means this, that Jesus revealed the goodness of God

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[1]Triglot Concordia, pp. 585, 677, 543.

[2]Exodus 20:3.

[3]Matthew 22:37.

or that He revealed the character of God as goodness. Christians believe that at the heart of the universe is a God of whom Jesus Christ 'is the image'[1]. The divine manifest in the moral perfection of the life of Jesus, as well as in His death."[2] In Jesus we see what God is like as to His moral nature. The moral principle in the life of Jesus is the moral principle of the Being who is at the heart of all things.

Forty-five per cent of the replies made reference to the God of all love as we are privileged to know Him in Christ. In some cases, however, the application of this love was frustrated in that they depicted a God who has revealed His love to man, but seldom was it indicated that His love evokes a Godward trust -- a trust which involves an expression and responsibility on the part of the recipient. One gained the feeling that perhaps it might be a one-way love. No specific mention was made that it is necessary for man to make a return of love to his heavenly Father if he is to become whole and cement his relationship with God.

Some of the clergymen stated most emphatically that conduct such as narcotic addiction, over-indulgence in

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[1]Colossians 1:15.

[2]A. D. Mattson, Christian Ethics, p. 69.

alcohol, extra-marital sexual activities, abortions and murder are contrary to the will of God. Therefore, in His holy love He must punish these sins in every form. On the other hand, some pointed out that our just and holy God would regard these transgressions according to the circumstances in which they were committed. The individual's motives and intent, which would be involved in these deviations from the will of God, would be taken into consideration. Several were not concerned as to whether the counselees had committed sinful acts, but rather how much these involvements caused the individuals to be emotionally disturbed or poorly adjusted in their present situations. Nevertheless, the general consensus of opinion decisively indicated that a belief in God and His unchangeable righteousness is a necessary and focal postulate in Christian ethics. With very few exceptions, the will of God was the foundation from which they projected their premises in determining the ethical responsibilities in the various situations suggested in the questionnaire.

THE NATURE OF MAN

A biblical Christocentric view of man with varied interpretations was noted both explicitly and implicitly in the survey replies. Before considering the specific anthropological postulates which we wish to emphasize in our thesis, it might be prudent to briefly glance at some of the opposite theories on the nature of man which in isolated instances were specifically singled out by the discussants of the counseling cases.

One line of thought upheld the view that man by nature is morally good. He is innately a creature of virtue and possesses in his makeup the powers to lead an upright and healthy life. References to Ecclesiastes 7:29 and Colossians 3:10 were made to substantiate this view. According to their interpretations the Bible decisively implies an inherent goodness in man. We might suggest that among the Greeks, and especially the Stoic teachers, this view was purported. They emulated the unlimited horizons of reason within the reach of mortal man. Pelagianism and Socinianism espoused this doctrine, and it continued to influence the theology of semi-Pelagianism, Arminianism and synergism as well. This theory was particularly prevalent during the revolutionary movements of the eighteenth century and among the modern rationalists. The church frequently

has not found favor with this school of thought because of the way in which it has minimized the importance of the divine grace of God in man's temporal and eternal redemption. Furthermore, they have stressed man's guileless nature and his moral capacity and independence as to make him virtually capable of saving himself through his own powers if his environment and societal relationships would not contaminate him. The influence of this theory has been most significant in the subsequent theology and practice of various Protestant denominations. In literature it has frequently made its appearance in subtle expressions rather than in more formal statements. In quite another manner some of the replies did not ignore the moral aspects of this view but they also treated sin and its consequences rather lightly, not as something positive but as something "a counselee might have to endure or grow out of".

The other view exposed man as an innately depraved creature who presently commences his life and exists in a corrupted state, with an inclination toward evil. Even more vociferously than their counterparts an appeal was made to the Scriptures to substantiate their views. "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."[1] The New Testament passages such as,

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[1]Psalm 51:5.

"That which is born of flesh is flesh"[1] and St. Paul's emphasis on the degradation of man were cited. The Augustinian doctrine of native depravity influenced later theology and certainly is not lacking in present day exponents. Likewise, the complete corruption of man's nature so graphically depicted by Calvin was most evident in the counseling philosophies of the various men. Although there definitely were a number of individuals who were adherents of these extreme points of view, most of the gentlemen made admirable efforts to reconcile the two polarities.

Man in the image of God

The participants in complete accord with Christianity affirmed that one of the basic principles of Christian morality is that man was created in the image of God. Man was explicitly referred to as a moral agent who is able to perceive the right and the wrong and choose between them. As such he is a free moral agent with the commensurate responsibility to his Creator, himself and his fellow creatures for his actions. The integrity, dignity and worth of man as the prime representative of God's creation with dominion over all other elements and creatures in the cosmos was frequently brought into the discussions.

Christians have given varied meanings and

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[1]John 3:6.

interpretations to the biblical postulate: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."[1]

Nicholas A. Berdyaev says, "The most important part of Christian teaching about man is that he is fashioned in the image and likeness of God; he reflects the highest in material creation; he is the child of God, and not merely a drop in the vast ocean of nature."[2] Man was created in God's image, a divine likeness consisting in man's true and thorough knowledge of God and of spiritual things and in his perfect righteousness and holiness.[3] In his original state the "divine image in man consisted not simply in man's original endowment with intelligence and will, so that he, in contradistinction to all animals, was a rational being, but above all in the right disposition of his intellect and will, so that by means of his undepraved intellect he knew God and divine things and by means of his uncorrupt will

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[1]Genesis, 1:26,27.

[2]Nicholas A. Berdyaev, Christendom I, p. 419.

[3]Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10.

desired only that which God wills. Also his appetition was in complete accord with the divine norm of holiness, so that in the state of integrity man was entirely upright and uncorrupt in all his endowments, powers and attributes."[1]

Ramsey feels that most of the theories concerning the Imago Dei fall into two general categories. "One view singles out something within the substantial form of human nature, some faculty or capacity man possesses, and identifies this as the thing which distinguishes man from physical nature and from other animals."[2] In the second approach "the image of God is rather to be understood as a relationship within which man sometimes stands, whenever like a mirror he obediently reflects God's will in his life and actions".[3] To illustrate the former he indicates man may be defined as "homo faber" or more frequently, some inner capacity of mind, or soul, or will is identified as the image of God within man. The Stoics spoke of the "divine spark" within man, by which man shares in the "eternal fire" pervading all nature. Aristotle entertained a view which is held by the average man and often enters into his arguments on the subject; namely, that man is distinguished from the

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[1]Mueller, p. 205.

[2]Ramsey, p. 250.

[3]Ramsey, p. 255.

other creatures by his rational capacities. "Instead of reason other aspects of human nature, themselves not so cool or dispassionate in their functioning, may be defined as the image of God. Influenced by romanticism we may incline toward the belief that the capacity most commanding respect is man's faculty for imagination and artistic creativity. Influenced by Kant's dictum that 'nothing in the whole world, or even outside of the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a good will,'[1] we may be greatly impressed with man's moral capacity, his moral will or moral freedom, and call these the image of God in him."[2] In very much the same way the personalistic idealism is expounded by A. C. Knudson in his Principles of Christian Ethics as the image of God defined as some capacity which is native to man or some part of the substantial form of his nature.[3]

In the course of Christian history the second approach has made the most distinctive explications of man in the image of God. St. Paul undoubtedly has initiated this approach which is concretely and decisively Christocentric. Although Augustine, Barth, Kierkegaard and Bonhoffer, to

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[1]Thomas Kingsmill Abbott, Kant's Theory of Ethics, p. 9.

[2]Ramsey, p. 251.

[3]Knudson, p. 64 ff.

mention a few, have in one way or another formulated their thinking on this premise, they have not improved on St. Paul's, "Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation",[1] Jesus is the God-man, the perfect man and true man as he really is. The existence of Jesus defines the character, contradiction and consummation of human existence. The fullness of his stature recreates that image in which man was originally created.[2] To these men Jesus is central in understanding the image of God and for that matter the understanding of nature itself. "For it is the God who said 'Let light shine out of darkness' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."[3]

Taking his conclusion one step further Ramsey agrees with Kierkegaard, "only when God has infinitely become the eternal and omnipresent object of worship, and man always a worshipper, do they resemble one another, and we can resemble God only in loving."[4]

We do not have the space to discuss the philosophical understanding of man, nevertheless, "the interpretation of

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[1]Colossians 1:15.

[2]Ephesians 4:13.

[3]II Corinthians 4:6.

[4]Soren Kierkegaard, Works of Love, p. 52.

the nature of man most commonly accepted in our day is that given by naturalism in its various forms. Naturalism sees no essential discontinuity between man and physical nature or between an individual human being and his social environment. 'I am not much more than an animal taught to dance by blows and scanty fare.'[1] This statement of Nietzsche's sums up the naturalistic reduction of the stature of man to the level of nature, although his words 'not much more' allow some slight room for special human dignity."[2] Ramsey summarizes his critique of naturalism by stating, "if ever the truth of some form of naturalism were established, precisely then nothing could be more certain than that naturalism is false".[3]

The ministers in the survey reflected that man is meaningless when an attempt is made to understand him apart from his Creator in whose image he was created. Before his loving Father man is special - for God created him in his image. The Bible clearly ascribes to man a uniqueness, worth and distinctiveness in his personal relation to God, a fact which was emphasized as a prerequisite in responsible counseling.

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[1]Frederick Nietzsche, Thus Spake Zarathustra, Prologue 6.

[2]Ramsey, p. 269.

[3]Idem.

Man his will and freedom

Ethics, especially Christian ethics, is vitally concerned with the will and its peculiar capacities. This is true because man as he was created in the imago Dei and as he now attempts to adjust to his present existence "is not only an intellectual being, (capable of knowing) and a sensitive being (possessed of feeling) but also a volitional being. That is, a being endowed with self-determining activity."[1]

The will has been called the capacity of the mind to choose and to execute; the autonomy of the Ego or Self and more popularly the free-will. This subject presents a problem and also definite significance in responsible counseling. The nature of freedom has been indecisively debated since time immemorial and there are some who feel the problem of the will is almost the history of philosophy. The questions are immediately before us. Does the individual have the power to transcend the gulf between the natural and the spiritual? Can man be held responsible for his acts? Does man have the power of choice, the endowment to decide between right and wrong? Is man a moral, self-conscious, self-determining being?

In most Christian circles the answers to these

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[1]Archibald B. D. Alexander, Christianity and Ethics, p. 12.

questions are affirmative. In fact, some theologians are so peremptory, additional discussion is deemed unnecessary. However, many individuals cut at the very roots of Christian ethical theory by denying the freedom of the will or the reality or necessity of moral judgments.

If man is to be held responsible for his acts it follows he must have freedom. On the other hand, if a man "must" will and do that which he wills and does, he cannot be held responsible for his actions. "If I have no freedom whatsoever, no ability to act differently from what I actually do, the sense of obligation and responsibility that I have must be regarded as an illusion, as a instinctive feeling that has gone astray."[1] These premises for the most part are accepted. However, the difficulties present themselves when an attempt is made to reconcile this position with divine providence, with divine grace, with the influence of man's existential situation.

For the purpose of our thesis we shall consider the Christian premise, previously stated, as valid without demonstrating it; not because it cannot be demonstrated, but because the demonstration of it belongs to a science other than that with which we are primarily concerned. Nevertheless, Christian ethics must be prepared to consider such

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[1]Knudson, p. 80.

difficulties as the following which are constantly with us.

The more common of these, for example, is the moral relativist. There are many of these persons today who deny the existence of moral distinctions as anything more than differences of individual taste and feeling. Their attitude and approach perhaps can be illustrated by the following question, "How can there be a science of ethics or a dogma of morality when right and wrong are simply matters of individual preference and bias?"

Closely related to the above individuals, who not only reject the freedom of the will, but also deny that the distinctions of Right and Wrong have any validity are what Canon Green calls the Social Unmoralists. They "regard all moral systems as the purely irrational product of the prevailing social organization." To illustrate he refers to the view which Marx has somewhat illogically grafted on to his determinist conception of society. As every material object casts a shadow, so, according to the Marxist view, every social system, itself determined by purely materialistic forces, carries with it a corresponding ethical system. If the economic organization of society changes, the ethical beliefs of men will automatically change with it.[1]

The incompatibility of these positions to the Christian

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[1]Green, p. 45.

postulate is quite apparent in their denial of the Ultimate Source of Right, God, the eternal, personal, self-existent, and perfect Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of the world.

Although it is vitally important to theology, philosophy and psychology, recent scholars have devoted little effort to the difficulties connected with the problems of moral freedom. Green discussed the hypothesis that denies the freedom of the will, which is called determinism or necessitarianism under the topics of psychological and metaphysical determinism. He felt both problems were old-fashioned and out-of-date but needed elaboration, because psychological determinism lingered among the less-educated, and the metaphysical determinism was receiving a new lease on life through the growth of the Marxism philosophy in the working class. However, for him man "is not determined by final causes but in truth in a self-creating being".[1] This is the important factor for life and ethical theory.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Alexander indicated the enigmas were centered in the "scientific, psychological and theological. On the part of the natural science it is claimed that man is subject, like everything else, to physical necessity. From the psychological standpoint it is urged that man's actions are always determined

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[1]Green, p. 54.

by the strongest motive. On the theological side it is alleged that human freedom is incompatible with divine Sovereignty."[1]

Dr. Mattson advances three types of determinism with a slightly different but significant emphasis. The first is theological. It deduces the impossibility of the freedom of the will from the power of human sin, from the work of divine grace, or from the omnipotence and omniscience of God, and issues in the doctrine of predestination. Knudson feels it is "based on the belief in the absoluteness of the divine grace and in the absoluteness of divine sovereignty. What theological determinists have been primarily concerned about has been to make man completely dependent upon the divine grace for his redemption. And this they have thought they could do only by denying to man in his fallen state the power of contrary choice and by identifying true freedom with the inability to sin or with spontaneity in the right direction - a spontaneity, however, which does not belong to our human nature but which is the gift of God, wrought in us by the Divine Spirit. We ourselves according to this theory, have no real freedom."[2]

The second is philosophical and may take on a

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[1]Alexander, p. 83.

[2]Knudson, p. 81.

materialistic, pantheistic, or fatalistic form. Further interpretation indicates, "Naturalistic determinism is based on the idea of universal and impersonal causality. On this basis there can be no freedom of contrary choice. Everything is determined by its antecedents or by its place in the cosmic system as a whole. This applies to human beings as well as to material objects."[1]

The third type is psychological. Man is absolutely predetermined by inner necessity and environment. Herbert Spencer an exponent of Determinism commented, the "physical changes either conform to law or they do not. If they do not conform to law this work, in common with all works on the subject, is sheer nonsense; no science of psychology is possible. If they do conform to law, there cannot be any such thing as free will."[2]

On the other hand, indeterminism, or libertarianism, insists upon absolute liberty of choice of the individual, and denies that necessity or continuity determines conduct. In its theological form the indeterministic attitude is represented by the various forms of Pelagianism. "The advocates of the free will, the Pelagians, taught that man by his own powers, without the grace of the Holy Ghost, can

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[1]Knudson, p. 80.

[2]Herbert Spencer, Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, p. 503.

turn himself to God. The semi-Pelagians teach that man by his own powers can make a beginning of his conversion. The synergists teach that man is too weak to make a beginning, but can cooperate and add something, though little and feeble to it."[1]

Psychologically James attempted to solve the dilemma by resorting to the idea of "chance" which he defines as a purely relative term, giving us no information about that which is predicated, except that it happens to be disconnected with something else - not controlled, secured or necessitated by other things in advance of its own actual presence.[2]

The difficulty with many of the indeterministic positions is the indication that will functions as something external. The will is not something apart from personality, but an aspect of man's total being, his innate dispositions, habits, environment and heredity are decisive factors in determining his choices. Over against these two posits we must "affirm self-determinism; it is the whole man who wills and not a faculty distinct from others.[3]

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[1]Theodore Engelder, Popular Symbolics, p. 42.

[2]James, The Will to Believe, p. 154.

[3]Alfred E. Garvie, The Christian Ideal for Human Society, p. 123.

Dr. Tillich states the "traditional discussion of determinism and indeterminism necessarily is inconclusive because it moves on a level which is secondary to the level on which the polarity of freedom and destiny lies. They are theoretically impossible because by implication they deny their claim to express truth. Truth presupposes a decision for the true against the false. Both determinism and indeterminism make such a decision unintelligible. This discussion concerning the 'freedom of the will' is an 'objectified' form of the ontological tension between freedom and destiny. Both partners in this discussion defend an ontological element without which being could not be conceived. Therefore, they are right in what they affirm but wrong in what they negate. The determinist does not see that the very affirmation of determinism as true presupposes the freedom of decision between true and false, and the indeterminist does not see that the very potentiality of making decisions presupposes a personality structure which includes destiny."[1]

The self-determining power of mortal being is recognized either explicitly or implicitly in the Bible. Man is never portrayed as if he were a mere automaton run in terms of "mechanistic determinacy" or in terms of an

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[1]Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, Vol. I, p. 182 ff.

"indeterministic contingency" sometimes erroneously called freedom. When our first parents were commanded to eat of the fruit of the garden and were forbidden to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the situation connotes, ipso facto, that man was endued with the power of choice. Every command, every exhortation, every appeal in the Bible, implies freedom of the will. "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."[1] "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all of these things shall be yours as well."[2] "Judge not, that you be not judged."[3] are exhortations which would be absurd if the will of man was pre-determined. These all denote conative ability.

"Freedom is a basic principle, in fact a sine qua non,"[4] of moral agency. If the Ego has no power of choice, it is dominated by necessity and completely divested of all ethical capacities. "Without real freedom, without the freedom of contrary choice, there can be no real obligation and no real responsibility. Without it the moral life would be in contradiction with itself."[5]

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[1]Matthew 11:28.

[2]Matthew 6:33.

[3]Matthew 7:1.

[4]Rollo May, The Art of Counseling, p. 51.

[5]Knudson, p. 82.

Christianity certainly has some specific contributions to make regarding this most important postulate, the freedom of the will. "The Augustinian view that since the Fall of Adam every man has been under the necessity of sinning implies that man's will is completely under the control of sin and cannot avoid sinning in any of its acts. While Reinhold Niebuhr rejects the doctrine of a 'necessity' to sin, his theory of the 'inevitability' of sin is very close to this Augustinian doctrine."[1] "The will", he says, "is capable of transcending past sin to the extent that it can feel regret for it in a later act of contemplation, but it cannot avoid sin in any of its future acts."[2]

In matters of civil or conventional morality sometimes referred to as "civil righteousness" Christianity upholds the will's freedom. The Bible does not indicate that man is the victim of his peculiar circumstances. He is capable, in this sphere of life, to choose between the right and the wrong and act upon his decision. "The human has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness, or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey

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[1]George F. Thomas, Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy, p. 194.

[2]Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, p. 277.

magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft. Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, and the liberty and power to render civil righteousness, are also left."[1]

However, it is necessary to remember that man's free will is definitely limited by his sinful condition. "And you he made alive, when you were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience."[2] "The power of concupiscence is such that men more frequently obey evil dispositions than sound judgment. And the devil, who is efficacious in the godless, does not cease to incite this feeble nature to various offenses. These are the reasons why civil righteousness is rare among men, as we see that not even the philosophers themselves, who seem to have aspired after this righteousness, attained it."[3]

However, "in the spiritual realm the Bible indicates the loss of the freedom of the will in spiritual matters.

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[1]Apology of the Augsburg Confession, Art. XVIII, 70.

[2]Ephesians 3:1,2.

[3]Apology, Art. XVIII, 71.

This means that man through the fall has not lost his free will; for although corrupt man is so perverted that he cannot do otherwise than sin (non potest non peccare), he nevertheless sins not against his will, but of his own free will. In other words, he is never coerced to sin, but commits sin of his own choice."[1] "The question is not whether the essence of the will has survived the Fall; for this we emphatically maintain, namely, that man has not lost his will, but the soundness of it."[2]

The term free will frequently is interpreted to signify that man possesses a spiritual potential to desire that which is spiritually good, to prepare himself for the divine grace, to fulfill the divine Law out of true love for God, to accept and believe the Gospel, and thus either to convert himself entirely or at least cooperate in his personal conversion and reconciliation with his Creator. If we use the phrase free will in this manner, we are confronted with such Scriptural passages as: "The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned."[3] "No man can come to me unless

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[1]Mueller, p. 236.

[2]Gerhard, Doctrinal Theology, p. 260.

[3]I Corinthians 2:14.

the Father who sent me draws him."[1] "For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God."[2] Quite explicitly they show that man does not receive the spiritual things, but regards them as foolishness, indeed, if he is dead through the trespasses and sins[3] he certainly is without the power to will that which is spiritually good, to apply himself to divine grace, and to prepare himself for, or to cooperate in his conversion.

The Formula of Concord says, in explanation: "In spiritual and divine things, which pertain to the salvation of the soul, man is like a pillar of salt, like Lot's wife, yea, like a log and a stone, like a lifeless statue, which uses neither eyes nor mouth, neither sense nor heart. For man neither sees nor perceives the terrible and fierce wrath of God on account of sin and death, but ever continues in his security, even knowingly and willingly. All teaching and preaching is lost upon him until he is enlightened, converted, and regenerated by the Holy Ghost. Therefore it is concluded the Scriptures deny to the intellect, heart and

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[1]John 6:44.

[2]Romans 8:7.

[3]Ephesians 2:1.

will of the natural man all aptness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will to undertake, to act, to work, or to concur in working, anything good and right in spiritual things as of himself."[1]

The psychological point of view more and more is emphasizing the necessity of freedom in effective counseling of the total being. The deterministic picture of personality is represented most explicitly in Freudian psychoanalysis. The psychotherapist Otto Rank has specifically pointed out the importance of freedom and its concomitant factor responsibility in his school. Formerly one of Freud's intimate associates, Rank finally was forced to break with him because of Freud's refusal to admit the centrality of creative will in psychoanalytic treatment. In his books Will Therapy and Truth and Reality he discusses the function of the will in personality and the importance of such qualities as freedom, personal autonomy, and moral responsibility. Concerning the importance of our topic he says, "The creative type is able to create voluntarily from the impulsive elements and moreover to develop his standards beyond identifications of the super-ego morality to an ideal formation which consciously guides and rules this creative

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[1]Formula of Concord, II. Free Will.

will in terms of personality. The essential point in this process is the fact that he evolves his ego ideal from himself, not merely on the ground of given but also of self-chosen factors which he strives after consciously."[1] Along with many other members of his fraternity he feels that we must take into consideration in all treatment that the individual creates his own personality by creative willing, and that neurosis is due precisely to the fact that the clients cannot will constructively.

The truest form and highest standard of freedom is the freedom of a Christian man which is ours in and through faith in Christ.[2] However, it is noted that this freedom is not a license. It is not a liberty to sin and then trust in the goodness and mercy of God for forgiveness. In several instances in the survey it was mentioned, in effect, that the grace of God is not a cloak for maliciousness. The Gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ has come to set man free from both the guilt and the power of sin.[3]

True Christian liberty and freedom consists in the agreement of the human will with the divine will. When the human will has been permeated and enveloped by the divine

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[1]Otto Rank, Truth and Reality, p. 9.

[2]John 8:34,36; Romans 8:2-4.

[3]II Corinthians 3:14.

love and man comes to the point where he desires to do the things which God wants him to do, this is no longer determinism, necessity or restraint. Man is free and has attained the highest type of freedom. In actuality he is free by being truly bound in God. Thus spiritual freedom does not consist in the ability to sin, but in finding oneself in harmony with the Moral Intelligence which is at the heart of our existence.

In order to utilize this great force of freedom in a responsible manner, it is essential for our chaplain/ministerial counselors to assist the counselee to an acceptance of his personal responsibility for the conduct and outcome of his life. They will assist him to see and understand the profound significance of the power of choice in his life; how all past and present experience, and even the great cogencies of the unconscious must be considered; but in the final analysis they will assist him to appropriate and employ his potentials of freedom: first of all, to enable him to live an honorable life and to choose in matters comprehended by his reason; and, secondly, to appropriate for himself through faith the enduring freedom which is his through Christ.

Man the sinner

Christian ethics presupposes the Christian doctrine of sin. Man was created in the image of God with distinct

qualities of uniqueness. He could listen and speak to God, he could love and be loved by God, he could obey or disobey God. Man rebelled against God. Man sinned. Most Christian theologians consider this basic to the understanding of man in the light of God. Therefore, it follows that Christian ethics must entertain a view which is consistent with the truths of revelation and in harmony with the facts of life. A fallacious or inadequate conception of sin and its significance in man's life is as detrimental to Ethics as it is to Dogmatics. This premise certainly was substantiated in the survey replies. Repeatedly the interpretations of evil colored the counseling philosophies and dictated specific approaches to the ethical problems.

"Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief, my soul and my body also. For my life is spent with sorrow, and my years with sighing; my strength fails because of my misery, and my bones waste away."[1]

"Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and

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[1]Psalm 31:9,10.

done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment. Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."[1]

Thus the anguished heart of man recognizes what we might call the antithesis of Right in his life, a negative condition which he constantly must face. He is confronted with the "tyranny of the should".[2] There is the inexorable demand of a standard which is somehow a part of man and a part of reality, yet which he is continually violating, not because he does not know what he "should" do, but because he does not will to do so.[3]

It is not in the province of this paper to discuss the complete nature and dynamics of sin, nevertheless, its paramount importance in all existence and its focal point in the survey answers, we feel, suggests a brief consideration of some of the major features of the concept of sin.

Human understanding is generally quite willing to acknowledge the fact of sin within our lives. The Biblical record attests the universality of sin: "No one is good

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[1]Psalm 51:1-5.

[2]Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth, cf. Chapter three for a more extensive discussion of this concept.

[3]David E. Roberts, Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man, p. 107.

but God alone";[1] and "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".[2] This is vividly substantiated by personal experience. However, the definitions of its essence and nature that are given on the basis of human dialectics are at best in an equivocal state. On the one hand its precise definition as an act which can separate man eternally from his God and on the other, a vague, nominalistic interpretation which has no more significance than that it is a stage in man's development toward perfection is a striking reminder that the doctrine of sin cannot be simply dismissed.

Throughout the course of history, with periodic lapses in emphasis, man has been directed to insist on his dignity and to minimize his finite characteristics and his aberrations from the straight and narrow. Of course, he has been cognizant of the evils which enfilade him from without and within. Rather than face the reality of his sinful nature he has nobly attempted to attribute his situation to various phenomena...or even tried to convince himself that sin does not really exist, but is merely the delusion of mortal mind. It has been asserted that sin is actually nothing but lack of knowledge or ignorance. If you do away with nescience you will also resolve sin. Socrates and

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[1]Mark 10:18.

[2]Romans 3:23.

Plato proposed that "we fail because we err; improvement of understanding means improvement of morals". Ritschl favored this view. He understood sin to be a lack of reverence and faith in God and placed the things of inferior worth above the "highest good", but he attributed the cause for these fallacies in man's lack of knowledge of God as the "highest good".

"Flacius maintained that original sin is not an accident or attribute but the very substance and essence of fallen man. Similarly Zwingli felt original sin is only a defect which one derives from birth without his own fault, and therefore it involves no guilt."[1] Spinoza, and in a somewhat different way Leibnitz, for example, considered sin as nothing but weakness due to the fact that man is a finite being and therefore defective and limited in his capacities. Again, sin has been considered as a necessary element in the development of man, a transitional stage through which he must pass in order to advance from unconscious to conscious moral freedom. This was the view, for example, of Schiller (Adam's sin was 'reason's first venture, the first beginning of his moral existence'), Goethe, and especially the pantheist Hegel."[2]

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[1] E. H. Klotsche, Christian Symbolics, p. 165.

[2] Reu, p. 90.

In certain of the writings of Augustine, Aquinas and Luther, we see an emphasis on every departure from the law or norm of the Eternal Right. In his Contra Faust Augustine defines sin as "a word, deed, or desire, contrary to the eternal law".[1] Aquinas calls it "nothing else than an evil human act...lacking in conformity with its due measure".[2] Luther in his Small Catechism explanation states, "Sin is any thought, feeling, word or act which is contrary to the will of God".[3] Dr. Neibuhr explains Dr. Tillich's interpretation of sin in this way: "Sin, Tillich declares in his Propositions, is the disruption of the essential unity between God and man by man's actualized freedom. Sin is 'Suende', 'Sonderung', separation. Up to this point sin is an ontological fate, that is, the fate of all particular existences in time. But he goes on to say, 'Sin is fundamentally 'unbelief' which includes theoretical denial and practical disobedience'. This second definition makes sin a historic corruption, as in the Bible. He thinks of these two facets as two dimensions of sin, but the ontological outweighs the historical."[4]

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[1]Augustine, Contra Faust, XXII, 27.

[2]Aquinas, Summa Theologica, I-II, q.71, a.6.

[3]Luther's Small Catechism.

[4]Tillich, p. 222.

"Considered etymologically sin is, in the first place, a negative concept, and as such it denotes man's lack of righteousness or lack of conformity with the divine law. (carentia conformitatis cum lege).[1] But sin is also a positive concept, and as such it denotes opposition to or transgression of, the Law, so that positively sin is a violation of the Law."[2]

The New Testament words used to denote the concept of sin give us some insight into the essence and nature of sin. ἁμαρτία denotes a failing to hit the mark. In the New Testament it is always used in the ethical sense. Thus, it has significance in failing to attain the mark as revealed in Jesus Christ. It has reference to both the act and to the result. ἀνομία means lawlessness, the condition of one without law, either because of ignorance of it, or because of violation of it. παράπτωμα is sometimes used in a milder sense denoting a lapse or deviation from truth and uprightness, a sin, misdeed. ἀσέβεια implies a want of reverence toward God, impiety, ungodliness, works of ungodliness. Dr. Mattson emphasizes, that "it implies opposition to God. Sin is not only anti-ethical but it is also anti-divine. The ethical teaching of Jesus has its

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[1] I John 3:4.

[2] Mueller, p. 211.

horizontal implications but there is always a predominant vertical and religious reference. Obedience or disobedience to God is the primary consideration. The ethics of the New Testament is always God-conscious. Sin is not only a transgression of the moral but all sin is ultimately sin against God."[1]

Sin has no eternal existence as a substance antagonistic to God. It is something which cannot exist apart from a personal being. Sin is something a man does. Its locus is in the will of man, though the body shares in it. Sin is a man's personal act. Although we often speak of the sins of society this really is not valid because sin must always be associated with the person. Therefore, sin is personal but it has its social consequences.

At this point I would mention a highly significant factor in the counseling situation. In accepting the counselee the Counselor should distinguish between sin and the sinner. Sin is a quality of the human ego and that ego is not to be identified with any particular quality which characterizes it. Therefore, it is possible to exemplify Christ's example of loving the sinner and hating his sin. In the event the Counselor violates this principle, his judgmental attitude may seriously frustrate the counseling

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[1]Mattson, p. 124.

relationship. It must be remembered that the essence of human nature is not sin.

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets."[1] "Love is the fulfilling of the law."[2] The opposite of love as we know it in Christ is the real essence of sin. A lack of love, or lovelessness is the heart of sin. Ramsey, who thinks of Christian ethics in terms of obedient love, offers these summary definitions of what sin means: "The opposite of all that Christian love means. Any falling short of disinterested love for neighbor for his own sake, love cut to the measure of Christ's love, any falling short of the strenuous teachings of Jesus, any falling short of the full definition of obligation contained in I Corinthians 13 - this is what is meant when Christians speak of man as sinful. If we ought to have 'faith effective through love', then sin means 'pride (or anxiety, the opposite of faith) working through selfishness'. Sin means: Anxious self-centeredness or self-centered anxiety."[3]

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[1]Matthew 22:37-40.

[2]Romans 13:10.

[3]Ramsey, p. 306.

Is there an explicit cause of sin? Does sin originate within man or find its genesis in a force from without man? Is man totally depraved or is man endowed with the potential to be without sin and keep the commandments of God if he wills to do so? How do we explain the origin of sin?

"We have observed that, in the main, contemporary Christianity has abandoned the idea of the inheritance of sin from Adam," states Ramsey. "How, then account for the origin of sin? The only answer that can be given to this question is to say that sin does not originate from anything besides man's own will. This is the ultimate meaning of 'original sin'; that every man is his own Adam, sin originates with him, he does not sin on account of anything. The evil which man does because of ignorance, bad environment, etc., may indeed be evil, but not on that account sinful. Even temptation does not compel; it only entices. Only by sin does sin come into the world."[1]

Bertrand Russell "feels most psychoanalysts make much of the sense of guilt or sin, which many of them seem to regard as innate. I cannot agree with them in this. I believe the psychological origin of the sense of guilt in the young to be fear of punishment or disapproval by parents or whoever is in authority. I conclude that 'sin', except

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[1]op. cit., p. 291.

in the sense of conduct toward which the agent, or the community, feels an emotion of disapproval, is a mistaken concept, calculated to promote needless cruelty and vindictiveness when it is others that are thought to sin, and a morbid self-abasement when it is ourselves whom we condemn."[1]

A viewpoint of modern liberal theologians is presented by Dr. Tennant in his treatise The Concept of Sin. According to him the essence of sin is comprised in deeds of the will that are in "conscious operation" to a known moral law, which is known by Revelation as God's will. However, an individual bereft of religion is not capable of sin and therefore has no responsibility for his acts. "If we press the indispensableness of the religious element in the concept of sin, and if we adopt the psychical definition of religion, then it will follow that persons - if there be, possessing no religion - who would confess, that is to say, to entertaining no ideas of deity or of the supernatural, and to feeling no religious sentiment of any sort - cannot be accounted sinners at all, in the sense which we agree to use that terms, however morally evil, even from their own point of view, may be their lives."[2]

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[1]Bertrand Russell, Human Society in Ethics and Politics, p. 80.

[2]F. R. Tennant, The Concept of Sin, p. 216.

A brief perusal of these views of the origin and concept of sin facilitates the understanding of Reinhold Niebuhr's polemical presentation of his Scriptural interpretation. "The Christian doctrine of sin in its classical form offends both rationalists and moralists by maintaining the seemingly absurd position that man sins inevitably and by a fateful necessity but that he is nevertheless to be held responsible for actions which are prompted by an ineluctable fate."[1]

Biblical sources insist that in no sense is God the cause and author of sin. "God must be charged with sin neither directly ('God created man with the evil tendency to sin') not indirectly ('God is a cause of sin in so far as He concurs in evil actions.' quoad materiale);"[2] nor does He in any way incite man to sin. "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted with evil and he himself tempts no one."[3] Although Pantheistic determinism in opposition to this position would charge God with being the cause of sin and some rationalists would extend this to deny the reality of sin, the Bible forthrightly attests that God has no pleasure in wickedness

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[1]Reinhold Niebuhr, p. 241.

[2]Mueller, p. 214.

[3]James 1:13.

and in no way concurs, approves or abets sin in any person.

Furthermore, "according to Scripture the external, or remote, yet principal cause of sin is the devil who sinned from the beginning,[1] and then seduced man into sin. The internal and directly efficient cause of sin is man's corrupt will which permits itself to be enticed into sin by Satan."[2] The Augsburg Confession states: "Although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly man."[3] St. Paul confirms our association with the sin of the first man: "Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned."[4] Paul also points out that even though man is a prisoner of his propensity to sin he nevertheless is responsible for his sins: "So they are without excuse for although they knew God they did not honor him as God."[5] Man's predicament is illustrated by Augustine: "Man's nature was indeed at first created faultless and without sin; but nature as man now has it into which every

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[1]I John 3:8.

[2]Idem.

[3]Augsburg Confession, Art. 19.

[4]Romans 5:12.

[5]Romans 1:20-21.

one who is born from Adam, wants the physician, being no longer in a healthy state. All good qualities which it still possesses...it has from the most High God, its Creator and Maker. But the flaw which darkens and weakens all these natural goods, it has not contracted from its blameless Creator...but from that original sin which it committed of its own free will."[1]

Man is born in the grips of original sin which means the guilt of Adam is imputed to him. "One man's trespass led to condemnation for all men...by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."[2] The Scriptures also connect another characteristic of original sin, hereditary corruption, with the natural mode of generation. "Behold I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."[3] "That which is born of flesh is flesh."[4] This is not a sin which men do or commit in their lives, but a sinful condition of their nature, which they have inherited by birth. "Since the fall of Adam, all men begotten in a natural way are born with sin, that is, without fear of God, without trust in God, with concupiscence; and this disease,

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[1]Augustine, Treatise on Nature and Grace, Ch. 3 Anti-Pelagian Wors, Vol. I, p. 238.

[2]Romans 5:18,19.

[3]Psalm 51:5.

[4]John 3:6.

or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal wrath upon those not born again through Baptism and the Holy Ghost."[1]

Luther most graphically refers to original sin as "person sin", "nature sin", or "essential sin", because it is "not a sin which is committed", but one which "inheres in the nature, substance, and essence of man, so that, though no wicked thought ever should arise in the heart of corrupt man, no idle word were spoken, no wicked deed were done, yet the nature is nevertheless corrupted through original sin."[2]

Original sin has specific ethical significance in that as it contaminates the nature of man, in particular the limitation of his will, it serves as a fountainhead for the innumerable actual transgressions with which man is inevitably associated. "So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me."[3] Thus the heart of man is perverted. "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander."[4] Reason no longer is fully reliable and is spiritually

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[1]Augsburg Confession, Article II.

[2]Formula of Concord, Epitome, I, 21.

[3]Romans 7:17.

[4]Matthew 15:19.

ignorant.[1] It has become highly susceptible to self-centered rationalizations and the influence of personal desires and the contingencies of its environment. The emotions, passions and natural appetites of man also have become distorted. Man no longer can enjoy the two polarities in his life of being both free and bound but now as Kierkegaard has analyzed it so aptly man is filled with anxiety which leads to sin.[2] Likewise, the natural passions or appetites, for example, the sexual impulse in many instances has ceased to be the joy and blessing the Creator intended it to be. In fact, these appetites have been so grossly misused and have usurped such a prominent place in man's thinking and conduct that some ethicists would classify the sins of lust and sensuality as the basic sin. However, "if we discount Hellenistic theology with its inclination to make sensuality the primary sin and to derive it from the natural inclinations of the physical life, we must arrive at the conclusion that Christian theology in both its Augustinian and semi-Augustinian (Thomistic) forms regards sensuality (even when it uses the words concupiscentia or cupiditas to denote sin in general) as a derivative of the more primal sin of self-love. Sensuality represents a

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[1] I Timothy 1:13.

[2] Kierkegaard, Der Begriff der Angst, p. 89.

further confusion consequent upon the original confusion of substituting the self for God as the centre of existence. Man, having lost true center of his life, is no longer able to maintain his own will as the centre of himself."[1]

Outside of man himself there are external occasions for sin. The Scriptures beseechingly warn mankind concerning the devil's prowess in seducing the regenerate and inciting the unregenerate into sin.[2] The world is another potent factor and stimulus to excite the evil inclinations in the heart of man.[3] Christianity today more than previously is recognizing that individuals are not isolated from each other, and independent of the culture of their groups. Every person must be prepared to contend with the forces of evil which surround him as they are embodied in the prevailing ideas, ideals, customs, patterns of conduct and various institutions of his environment. In their totality they constitute as Ritschl called it, "a kingdom of sin". It is unlikely that these stimuli and temptations to sin will occur separately. They usually are found together, each strengthening and being strengthened by the other. Nevertheless each individual must realize whether the temptations

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[1]Niebuhr, pp. 232-233.

[2]I Peter 5:8; Luke 22:31; Matthew 4:1 ff.

[3]I John 2:15-17; I Corinthians 15:33.

are internal or external; the responsibility for his sinful actions are his alone. The Epistle of James reminds us: "Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin; and sin when it is full-grown brings forth death."[1] Thus man succumbs and sin becomes a reality.

"The Bible defines sin in both religious and moral terms. The religious dimension of sin is man's rebellion against God, his effort to usurp the place of God. The moral and social dimension of sin is injustice. The ego which falsely makes itself the centre of existence in its pride and will-to-power inevitably subordinates other life to its will and thus does injustice to other life."[2]

This revolt against God is not simply a set of specifically isolated disobedient acts or something which is imperfect. It is a self-centered direction of the will of the flesh which militates against the perfect will of God. It permeates the human soul and evidences itself in specific acts which are contrary to God's law. However, if we concentrate our attention on the specific aspects of various sins, we may lose this larger and more telling perspective of the nature of sin. We may easily drift into the concept

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[1]James 1:14, 15.

[2]Niebuhr, p. 179.

of weighing sins over against each other, and of devising devious ways of overcoming sins by the avenue of merit. Nor does man ordinarily turn his back on his Creator so completely as to sever all relations with his Maker. Few, if any, men carry their self-centered attitudes to the ultimate, namely, to assert that within themselves they are complete and self-sufficient personalities. "Instead, sin...assumes the guise of idolatry, of adopting some other religious orientation than worship of the true God. This notion of 'idolatry' is a religious and also an ethical category. It is the exact opposite of 'obedient love' which we have seen to be the positive religio-ethical category in Christian ethics."[1] The sin of idolatry, the work of self-love, is also a sin of failing to love God. The act of turning toward oneself is also an act of turning away from God.

Christian thought with some degree of consistency has agreed that the basic sin, psychologically and positively speaking, is pride and self-centeredness. The basic sin of loving ourselves instead of loving God is at the bottom of all other sins. Luther uses the terms pride and self-love synonymously. He uses a word which has the sound of the depth psychologists, "der Ich-wille". For Luther this term is synonymous with the "ego" which is both persistent and

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[1] Ramsey, p. 295.

powerful, always lobbying for its own interests and lodged in man's elemental nature. "This ego-will, mostly submerged like an iceberg, is the seat of man's self-assertion against God and is the basis of his life and behavior as a sinner. [1] C. S. Lewis in his treatise on Christian Behavior says, "The essential vice, the utmost evil is pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that are mere flea-bites in comparison. It was through pride that the devil became the devil. Pride leads to every other vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind."[2]

The self-deception of individuals to pay homage to other gods instead of the true God is well understood in the Scriptures as a pious veneer for the self-love of man. "Idolatry is well understood in the Bible as differing from the pure worship of Israel's God in the fact of its personification and objectification of the human will in contrast with the superhuman transcendence of the true God. When an idol is worshiped, man is worshiping himself, his desires, his purposes, and his will....The idols are so described as to give the impression that they are devoid of a will or mind of their own.... The idols are the work of men's hands, and the personal qualities they are alleged to possess are

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[1]Theodore Bachman, "Man" What Lutherans are Thinking, p. 162.

[2]C. S. Lewis, Christian Behavior, pp. 43-44.

really ascribed to them by human beings by a magnificent process of self-deception. These idols are the glorified projections of the will of their human followers and supporters. (They) were really embodiments of human thought and desire. The chief sin was rebellion against God, the other-than-man, and the glorification of man-made images, who were gods in name only. These gods were made in the image of man - in the image of his mind, desire, and purpose. As a consequence of this type of idolatry, man was outrageously guilty of giving himself the status of God and of exalting his own will as of supreme worth."[1] The two movements within 'idolatry' - i.e., absolutizing something finite, and in so doing seeking the interests of self - sum up 'sin' in the self's attitude toward the employment of its own physical, mental and moral powers and in its external relationships to possessions and to other persons. Thus if the spiritual self-centeredness is focused in the body the resulting sin may become sensuality; if in religion the sin may become intolerance, persecution, tyranny; if in the mind the sin may become pride of knowledge; if in good deeds and moral character the sin may become pride of virtue or self-righteousness; if in possessions, status or neighbor-relationships the sin may become pride of power or

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[1]Otto Baab, The Theology of the Old Testament, pp. 105, 110.

imperialism."[1] In this oversimplified manner we can see the Christian ethical significance of the basic sin of pride-egocentricity, which is "idolatry; the work of self-love" and the resulting attempt to usurp the place of God rather than to possess a humble belief and faith in Him.

Psychologically and positively we looked at the essence of sin as pride, self-love. If we view it in terms of theology, we see it negatively take on the meaning of lack of faith or unbelief. It is interesting to note that Christ rarely spoke of sin, but frequently in terms of unbelief and lack of faith. In John He affords us this distinct clue: "When He (the Holy Spirit) is come He will convince the world of sin...of sin, because they do not believe in me".[2] It is quite evident that His is not an atomistic conception of sin as separate disobedient acts and this alone, but rather one which involves the totality of a personality, a matter of frustrated and disturbed relationships between man and his Creator as a result of lack of faith.

"Christian orthodoxy has consistently defined unbelief as the root of sin, or as the sin which precedes pride."[3] The quandary of man is that although he was created to live

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[1]Ramsey, p. 299.

[2]John 16:8.

[3]Niebuhr, p. 183.

in a reciprocal atmosphere of love and trust, he has chosen to persist in unbelief. "Pride in relationship to God is unbelief.... God is all about us. In Him we live and move and have our being - and yet we do not believe. Theologically speaking, unbelief is the basic sin, the ultimate sin; unbelief in the love of God in the very face of this love; unbelief in death in the very face of death; and unbelief in the judgment of God in the very face of this judgment."[1]

Before briefly considering the consequences of man's revolt against a gracious and forgiving God, a classification of the different ways in which sin actually manifests itself will afford additional understanding of its ethical significance.

Even though all sins are committed against God,[2] some are explicitly directed against Him, our neighbor or one's self. Idolatry or worshiping and serving other gods than the true God is an example of the first.[3] Murder, and stealing would fall in the second group.[4] Suicide and drunkenness belong in the third class.[5] External sins are

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[1]George W. Forell, Ethics of Decision, p. 78.

[2]Psalm 51:4.

[3]Matthew 22:37, 38.

[4]Matthew 22:39.

[5]I Corinthians 6:18.

those of word and deed. Internal sins are those of thought and heart. Christian ethical conduct is concerned not only with the outward act but with the inward disposition as well.[1] It may be a sin of commission when we do what is forbidden in God's law,[2] or a sin of omission when we fail to do what is commanded in God.[3] "Love is the fulfilling of the law."[4] Love not only refrains from doing that which is evil but also concerns itself with doing that which is good. Unfortunately, Christianity too frequently has suffered a grave injustice and in many instances serious setbacks because many of its adherents' ethical conduct consists primarily of "don'ts". In His instructions to His followers Christ emphasized time and again the positive aspect of doing the ethically and morally good and the evils of omission.[5] Although the Reformers and some of the modern exponents of orthodoxy have been accused of placing too much emphasis on man's depraved condition, a closer perusal, for example, of Luther's explanation of the ten commandments indicates a consistent positive approach. The first portion

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[1]Matthew 5:21-30.

[2]Exodus 20:13-17.

[3]James 4:7.

[4]Romans 13:10.

[5]Matthew 25:31 ff.

of his meanings of the commandments is normally negative, "We should fear and love God",[1] but he always concludes with a positive exhortation. To be sure this aspect of Christian ethics needs continuous attention and emphasis.

Known sins are those which we know to be against the Law and Will of God. Unknown sins are those of which we are not conscious or we do not know that they are sins.[2]

Voluntary sins are such as we commit by deliberate volition, and also contrary to the dictates of our conscience.[3] Involuntary are those which are committed without sure knowledge[4] or without a deliberate purpose of the will[5] or when man is carried away by the lust of his flesh to do that which he would not do.[6]

Venial sins are sins of weakness. They are limited to the believers and do not kill the faith, because they are not done intentionally. In themselves they are involuntary sins, and are worthy of punishment but are forgiven for Christ's sake, in whom the believer trusts and in whose

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[1]Luther, The Ten Commandments, Triglot, p. 539.

[2]Leviticus 4:2; Romans 7:7.

[3]John 13:26-30.

[4]I Timothy 1:13.

[5]Luke 22:55-62.

[6]Romans 7:15.

strength he continually repents of his sins. On the other hand mortal sins have been interpreted as those sins which mortify the faith and repell the Holy Spirit from the heart, because it is impossible for man to sin wilfully and intentionally and at the same time believe in Christ for the forgiveness of his sins.[1]

The Scriptures not only advise concerning our personal sins, which we commit ourselves, but are most explicit concerning participating in the sins of others.[2]

The Scriptures and much of Christian though have distinguished between greater and lesser sins. This is the view that some sins are more serious than others. Degrees in sinning is Biblically illustrated by "that servant who knew his master's will, but did not make ready or act according to this will, shall receive a severe beating. But he who did not know, and did what deserved a beating, shall receive a light beating".[3] Reinhold Niebuhr among others have asserted the "equality of sin" while admitting the "inequality of guilt".[4]

A pardonable sin is a sin of which it is possible to

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[1]John 8:21,24.

[2]Ephesians 5:7; I Timothy 5:22.

[3]Luke 12:47,48.

[4]Niebuhr, p. 222.

repent while the unpardonable sin excludes this possibility of repentance. "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. And whoever says a word against the Son of man will be forgiven; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."[1] The sin against the Holy Spirit is unpardonable because it is malicious and persistent resistance against the converting and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit through which alone sinners are saved. Because of the essence and implications of this sin it has been called by many theologians the most grievous of all sins.

There is a strong tendency in some circles of Protestantism to reject this type of classification of sins on the ground that it may do exactly the opposite of its intended purpose, namely, encourage man's pride and self-sufficiency instead of making him cognizant of the manifold temptations by which Satan, the world and his own flesh tend to lead man into revolting against God. Nevertheless these Scriptural distinctions, provided they are used in the spirit of love as intended, may serve the practical ethical purposes indicated by St. Paul: "All scripture is inspired by God

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[1]Matthew 12:31, 32.

and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."[1]

The understanding of the consequences of man's inevitable revolt against God is a sine qua non for the chaplain/ministerial counselor. In viewing the effects of sin psychologically we have indicated positively that sin is in essence egocentricity or self-love. If sin is egocentricity, it follows that the result of sin will be a breakdown of the vital relationships in which man lives. The essence of life is interchange, pulsation, motion and fellowship; there can be none of these if there is self-love. Instead of following the Lord's dictum to love our neighbors as ourselves, self-love enjoys competing against them and even looking down on them. Therefore, sin alienates and estranges man from his fellowman. Peer Gynt piercingly describes the personal isolation found where this egocentricity develops to its final fruition in mental illness; "Each shuts himself in a cask of self, the cask stopped with the bung of self and seasoned in a well of self."[2]

What is even worse is that self-love, sin, not only separates a person from others in his environment, but

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[1] II Timothy 3:16.

[2] Rollo May, Anxiety, p. 41.

separates him hopelessly from his God. Sin isolates because it seeks to make God a servant of one's own ego and attempts to secure from God some personal benefit as the result of divine help. So again there is no exchange with the world outside but an attempt to draw the forces of the universe, including God, in upon one's own self, the very opposite of love which seeketh not its own.

The essence of man's relationship to God is humble and grateful dependence resting upon trust in His goodness and forgiving love; there can be none of these when love of self places man in the center of his life instead of God. Man created in complete unity with God is now estranged from God, because there can be no unity of mind and purpose between the egocentric sinner and the self-giving God.

The tremendous popularity of the "peace of soul" and "peach of mind" best-sellers is indicative of another result of man's frustration of his intended existence of harmonious communion with his God, fellowmen, self and environment. Although fear, anxiety and often utter despair have always been the result of sin in the hearts of men, modern man seems to exemplify the characteristics of their full fruition more than ever before. Man was designated to find contentment, peace and hope in God; there continues only fear, anxiety and despair as long as he seeks the solution to his historical contradiction in himself. This is man's

dilemma: He has exercised his egocentricity and has thus destroyed his relationship with God by his own free will, but he is unable to effect his own release. His predicament is so involved that even to admit guilt requires spiritual resources that are available only from God; the One against Whom he has sinned.

It has been much more difficult for man to accept the full import of the consequences of sin in the theological rather than in the psychological sense we have briefly discussed. The consequences not only indicate implications for this temporal life but for eternity as well. Whether we view sin as sinful conditions or a sinful act, guilt is an immediate and irresistible consequence. Everything that is sinful is contrary to God's law and issues in guilt. "He hath sinned, and is guilty."[1] Even as the Scriptures speak of degrees of sin it is quite natural that guilt, the correlative of sin, would be discussed in terms of degrees.[2] In James we are given a more complete picture of the all inclusive nature of sin. "For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it."[3] By breaking one portion of God's law man in principle is

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[1]Leviticus 6:4.

[2]Luke 12:47 ff; John 19:11.

[3]James 2:10.

disregarding the entire law. Therefore as all men have sinned, all men through sin are guilty before God.

Man, who is finite, nevertheless has been granted a prodigious degree of rational powers. In the course of daily events sin in its many forms and conditions too frequently is taken lightly and man loses sight of the fact that it is a revolt against Almighty God and its guilt must be determined by the position of Him against Whom man has sinned. As man stands before the Almighty, and fully comprehends the Majesty of Him against Whom he has sinned, even simple human courtesy and propriety should impel him to fall prostrate in deep and sincere remorse. To be sure, this does not happen but this reality makes the Biblical position that guilt entails and demands punishment, even to the extent of death, a reasonable, if not an understandable, fact.

Thomas Aquinas consistently connects sin-guilt-punishment. In so doing he was simply restating Augustine, to whom he makes frequent references. Regarding guilt he taught that actual sin has more of the nature of guilt than original sin.[1] "Since sin is contrary to the divine order, it is guilt and subject to punishment. Guilt and punishment correspond to each other; and since the 'apostacy from the

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[1] Anton Pegis, ED. Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas, p. 132.

invariable good which is infinite', fulfilled by man, is unending, it merits everlasting punishment."[1]

This is a part of God's world order; it is demanded by the majesty of the law and of the offended Lawgiver, testified by conscience, and required by the very essence of God. As the absolute personality God cannot permit the sinner simply to ignore Him. As the Righteous and Holy One He hates sin and all ungodliness and must banish it from His presence.[2] "You shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy."[3] That is the fundamental requirement for where God meets ungodliness his holiness becomes a consuming fire. "If the moral economy is to be maintained, justice demands the punishment of the sinner; otherwise the government of God would be destroyed."[4]

The penalty of God for sin is death.[5] The Scriptural meaning for death indicates a threefold separation and alienation of sinful man from the Holy God: spiritual death, temporal death, and eternal death.

Spiritual death is the separation of the soul from God.

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[1]R. Seeberg, "St. Thomas Aquinas", New Schaff-Herzong Encyclopedia, p. 422.

[2]Psalm 5:5; Habakkuk 1:13.

[3]Leviticus 19:2.

[4]Leander Keyser, A Manual of Christian Ethics, p. 90.

[5]Romans 6:23; 5:12; Genesis 2:17.

When man sinned he lost the divine image and became alienated from God and entirely corrupt in his whole nature.[1] Man did not lose his mind, nor were his general psychical powers destroyed; but the original innocence and moral integrity in which he was created were forfeited by his disobedience. Thus man lost all true reverence, love and trust for his Creator. He has no yearning, no longing for God, but all of his inclinations and appetites are centered in himself, the things of this life and are under the dominion of sin. Indicative of this is the phenomena that the more a sinner decides in favor of a given sin, the more power will that particular sin exercise over him until it finally becomes a passion that will not release him.

Man, who was created to live, is now born to die. Temporal death is the separation of the body and the soul, the severance of the two vital constituents which God had joined together to form a living being. To this mortal end Adam was subject from the moment he sinned; to this bodily dissolution men are subject from the moment of their birth. "It is appointed for men to die once."[2] Concomitantly all bodily diseases and miseries, evils and misfortune, toilsome labor and adversity, are but precursors of man's earthly demise.

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[1]John 3:5, 6.

[2]Hebrews 9:27.

What was meaningful for temporal death is even more significant for eternal death, which is the eternal separation of man from the blissful presence of God. This is the culminating penalty for those children of men who have chosen to live in the grips of spiritual death and while in this state have succumbed to temporal death, the inevitable terminus for all men. "They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."[1] This death is not annihilation, but everlasting punishment.

The conclusion we must draw from this is that man was created in the image of God. Man was created by God to live in communion with Him in love, but man has refused to listen to Him, speak to Him, love or believe in Him. Pascal in his "Pensees" paints the despicable consequence: "What a chimera then is man! What a novelty! What a monster, what a chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy! . . . Judge of all things, imbecile worm of the earth; depository of the truth, a sink of uncertainty and error; the pride and refuse of the Universe."[2] Man in the light of his sins is the exemplification of failure. He certainly does not represent hope. Nevertheless this contradiction in man can be overcome and

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[1]II Thessalonians 1:9.

[2]Pascal, Pensees, Fragment 434.

he can be restored to fellowship with His Maker and quickened unto a new spiritual life and begotten unto a lively hope through faith in Christ.[1]

Man and his conscience

The use of the terms "ethical responsibility" in the questionnaire suggested to some of the informants some kind of standards of value and conduct, which in turn involved the conscience with its many and devious implications. To be sure the various students of ethics in the interested departments of theology, philosophy and psychology vary in their explanations as to how the conscience comes into existence, but all agree that it is an integrate factor in human personality, related and involved in all that a person may think, say or do. Some maintain that it is congenital with man, innate; others feel it is acquired, developed, internalized or a combination of two or more of these. Some have thought it to be reason; others intuition; still others emotion or feeling. Some have considered it a universal and objective moral faculty; others particular and subjective. Among other names it has been called the "voice of God", "God's deputy in the soul", "sense of oughtness", "the infallible judge", "an internal monitor", "a restricting censor", "an authoritative guide to man's conduct", and now

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[1] I Peter 1:3.

the "super-ego with its ego-ideal".

However, in spite of these divergencies all are in accord that the conscience plays a very vital role in the individual's daily existence. Scriptures have been joined by the affirmations of modern psychological research in stating that everyone possesses a conscience and is constantly under its surveillance and influence. Every human action and reaction is a matter for this moral factor within the life of man. To hold that it is an inherent capacity of man; to call it the "voice of God"; to describe it culturally as a taboo-structure, or dynamically as a compulsion neurosis does not change the reality of conscience itself.

The complexity of comprehensively defining the conscience becomes more intricate when we review its many usages and the states that have been ascribed to it. The names which we have previously cited indicate some of the usages. In addition, we think of the ethical conscience, scientific, religious, artistic and legal conscience. A cursory perusal of the word conscience directs our attention to the fact that it frequently has been qualified by many adjectives such as certain, doubtful, good, bad, enslaved, erroneous, scrupulous, strict and infallible just to mention a few of the delimitating words which have been used to give it a more decisive specificity. An accurate explanation

must consider all of these.

What is conscience? The specific word "conscience" is not used in the Old Testament. However, it is quite evident this does not mean this moral faculty was not recognized. The word "heart" is apparently employed to express the ideas involved in what we now call conscience.[1] Although the term is not found in the teachings of Christ, once again its concept seems to be recognized.[2] In the Pauline and Petrine epistles and the epistle to the Hebrews the word occurs frequently. The Greek word, συνείδησις, which means "joint-knowledge" or "self-consciousness" is used, but the meaning of this word alone does not afford the complete Biblical meaning and interpretation of its function in the life of man.

As to the etymology of the word "conscience", it is derived from the Latin conscientia, meaning to "know with". However, once again, this alone does not reveal the full significance of its technical meaning. The Stoics apparently were the first to make use of the word several centuries before Christ. Dr. Fletcher states: "Conscience and consciousness are inseparable and presuppose each other. Their interdependence has always been recognized, since the

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[1]Psalm 38:2-11; 51:1-9; 73:21; I Samuel 24:5,10,11.

[2]Luke 12:57; Matthew 6:22 ff.

Stoics first explored the cognitive aspect of conscience as distinct from the judicial, and recognized that to act with conscientia, with knowledge, requires consciousness. The Stoics predicated awareness and consciousness of Natural Law insight."[1] They apparently continued to use this word exclusively in this sense until the early part of the Christian era, at which time Seneca of Rome and Philo of Alexandria called the conscience an incorruptible judge.

From these beginnings it became known as the "infallible judge", a view which is not uncommon today. Robert Hall explains his version of this thesis: "Be it what it may, let the first whisper of the eternal monitor be listened to as an oracle, as the still small voice which Elijah heard when he wrapped his face in his mantle, recognizing it to be the voice of God." Rousseau asserted: "Reason deceives us often, conscience never!" Conscience came to be recognized as that distinct universal moral faculty capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and by its judgments to enforce moral obligation. It was not uncommon for Christian theologians to entertain this view, with the distinction, that the moral faculty is the moral law written in the heart of man at creation. To them conscience was synonymous with natural law. Paul's well-known passage in

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[1]Joseph Fletcher, Morals and Medicine, p. 201.

the second chapter of Romans frequently has been used to substantiate this "natural law" premise.[1]

Still other Christian scholars have avowed the natural law of God written in the hearts of men plus communion with God through Christ and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit is its true essence.

In our discussion on sin we learned that following man's fall into sin he suffered spiritual death, moral perversion, mental and physical deterioration and loss of true knowledge of God's divine will. Moreover, the conscience also was influenced, but we notice immediately after the Fall, the conscience was still on duty condemning those who had rebelled against their Creator and driving them shamefully into hiding. Subsequently, Biblical personalities such as Joseph, David, Judas, and Peter have witnessed to the power of conscience. The Lord in His graciousness has preserved this voice in man, thus furnishing Himself a media through which He could appeal to sinful mankind.[2]

For additional insight into the Biblical conception of the conscience and its specific functions we turn to several New Testament references. As previously mentioned συνείδησις expresses the idea of self-consciousness or knowing oneself,

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[1]Romans 2:14-16.

[2]Romans 1:32; 3:19,20.

however, St. Paul also uses it in the context of being aware of one's ethical behavior and passing judgment on this behavior. "The testimony of our conscience that we have behaved in the world, and still more toward you, with holiness and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God."[1]

The conscience must be distinguished from the natural knowledge of the Law, to which it "bears witness", even as we differentiate between a judge and the law by which he judges. St. Paul explicitly makes this distinction by explaining the manner in which it carries out this mission, namely, by accusing or perhaps excusing one's own acts.[2] Thus, all mankind in addition to having the law written in their hearts also have the consciousness of an inner norm distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting them to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other.

On the basis of the above it would be possible to think of the conscience functioning on the basis of an autonomous standard with no relation to a higher authority. However, the concept of the conscience denoting the conscicusness of one's moral and ethical action in relation to God is clearly

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[1]II Corinthians 1:12; Romans 9:1.

[2]Romans 2:15; 13:5; I Corinthians 8:7 ff; 10:25 ff.

indicated in Scripture as we see it in I Peter 2:19 whose συνείδησις θεοῦ is identical in construction with the συνείδησις ἁμαρτιῶν in Hebrews 10:2. Acts 24:16 clearly speaks of the relationship of a "clear conscience toward God". Likewise it is interesting to note that wherever man is confronted with God or His Will, or when God is revealed to man through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, Biblical references present the conscience as good, upright, free from corrupt desire,[1] conscious of good deeds,[2] and morally good.[3] However, if man's attitudes were not in accord with his Creator the conscience is referred to as evil[4] or seared.[5] The writer of Hebrews contrasts the inability of the Old Testament "gifts and sacrifices of bulls and goats to take away sins and perfect the conscience of the worshipper, whereas, how much more shall the blood of Christ ... purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."[6] Thus, we see the conscience is not always a prohibition gloomily declaring, "Thou shalt not --", "You

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[1]Titus 1:15.

[2]I Peter 2:12.

[3]Hebrews 13:18.

[4]Hebrews 10:22.

[5]I Timothy 4:2.

[6]Hebrews 9:10,15; 10:5.

ought not to have --", as Bonhoffer insists,[1] but rather it may be a glorious blessing. It not only recognizes the sins within our lives and disapproves of their presence, but when these sins are forgiven through faith in Christ this same conscience immediately approves and commends us for living in harmony with God's will. By its soul-stirring disapprobations it makes sin difficult and by its commendatory approbations it makes the path of duty and righteousness much easier.

The actual roles of the συνείδησις may be examined in terms of the names ascribed to the branches of our democratic form of government, providing we do not include the legislative branch. It is not in its sphere to decree or annul the moral norms or standards but judicially to make categorical attestations and judgments as to the agreement or disagreement between the acts of the individual concerned, whether contemplated or already executed, and the standards previously accepted. Likewise it is not in the province of the conscience to question the validity or rightness of the norm. If the person believes a standard to be valid and true, even if it is erroneous, the conscience will function on the basis of the accepted false norm. However, if the individual learns of the fallacy and rejects it, the

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[1]Eberhard Bethge, (Ed.) Dietrich Bonhoffer Ethics, p. 148.

conscience will no longer hold him responsible to it, but on the other hand will obligate him to his enlightened standard.

Once the particular actions have been weighed, and the decisions have been made, the executive function prior to a contemplated action urges the person to perform the acknowledged wrong. However, following the completion of an act, it indicates its approbation for having performed the acknowledged right, and its approbation for having performed the acknowledged wrong.

Must the conscience always be obeyed? Professor Kirk asserts: "It is a first principle of morals that wherever conscience gives a clear ruling for or against an act, it must be unhesitatingly obeyed, even though impartial criticism holds that the conscience is 'erroneous' - that is, that the agent's judgment as to what is right or wrong in the matter is at fault."[1] Another question closely associated with this one asks: "Is the conscience an infallible guide for conduct?" The individual conscience is not an infallible guide but is in need of constant enlightenment, education and even correction. The degree to which the conscience can be trusted to afford true vision as a guide to the blessings of the Christian life is dependent upon this enlightenment. Therefore, how important it is for

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[1]Kenneth E. Kirk, Some Principles of Moral Theology, p. 179.

our chaplain/ministerial counselors to place upon their consciences the momentous responsibility that is theirs to teach and lead their parishoners into the depths of God's holy will, even as it is revealed in Christ and His Holy Word. All too frequently the statement, "It doesn't make any difference what a man believes, as long as he is sincere", is said innocently without realizing the tremendous implications. The paramount importance of instruction in Christian truth cannot be emphasized too much. Our conscience, which has been given to us to assist us in our moral and spiritual lives, can lead us to our own despair if the norms and standards are fallacious. St. Paul laboring under a false conception of Christ devoted himself to the persecution of the followers of Christ because "I myself was convinced that I ought to do many things in opposing the name of Jesus of Nazareth".[1] This same Paul testified before the high priest Ananias and his council: "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience up to this day".[2] Nevertheless, when Paul saw the light in the truth as it is in Christ, he was impelled by this very same conscience to humbly confess that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And I am the foremost of sinners."[3]

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[1] Acts 26:9.

[2] Acts 23:1.

[3] I Timothy 1:15.

In addition to the faithful instruction of the conscience, it must be freely used and exercised. The effectiveness of the conscience tends to become atrophied and desuetude. "Conscience is like an alarm clock. If we fail to heed the signal morning after morning, we finally become so accustomed to it that we no longer hear it. If man fails to heed the voice of conscience, it may cease to function. The sense of sin is always keenest in the saint."[1] For it to become increasingly more reliable and grow morally stronger the prerequisites are constant spiritual nurture and utilization.

Still many equivocal questions surround this mysterious faculty and its functions. Too many still regard it much too lightly with little understanding or concern for its significance in their lives. Yet the same people, depend on their conscience to be their guide for conduct. The informants in the survey also indicated strong tendencies, as it were, to play the conscience by ear. Still others attempt to reject its existence and efficacy altogether. They may minimize or attempt to disregard it but only to their peril. In the past the conscience often has been regarded as a restricting and censorious judge. Undoubtedly this has made it a most distasteful topic and individuals have not delved

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[1] Mattson, l. 151

into its meanings for them. Now that psychiatric insights no longer feel it is merely a negative component but have joined the many Christians who have experienced the joys, peace and confidence which are theirs because their conscience has vividly testified to their whole being that they are living in harmony with God's Holy Will, it is hoped more people will properly use their conscience and share in these often overlooked blessings. It is becoming more clearly understood in religious and psychological studies and research, and often only through bitter and painful experience is it being learned that the conscience is truly a dynamic force with results for good or ill, peace or fear, love or loneliness, joy or depression, success or failure.

THE REDEMPTION OF MAN

In the preceding chapters we have emphasized the predicament and contradiction in man. The God of all love created him in His own image capable of living in complete harmony with his Creator and fellowman, but he has revolted against his God and has fallen into sin. The consequences have been great and at times the threatening aspects of his self-isolation, his personally contrived alienation from God and his neighbor, and the constant reminders of his conscience have brought him to the brink of despair. Is man's situation hopeless? Does man stand alone in his inability to cope with the powers of evil? Can man become reconciled to his God and restored to an obedient love? With few exceptions all are agreed that man can overcome his fallen state, but opinions vary as to how this restoration is to be accomplished.

Can this be effected merely by a divine fiat of amnesty whereby pardon, salvation and reinstatement to his true self are bestowed upon the rebellious creature without any satisfaction to the eternal court of justice? No, this would destroy the Creator's moral government in the universe. Is man capable of evolving his own modus operandi as well as his own redemption? Man has given his own tragic answer in history. Man left to his own designs eventually deteriorates

into "nothingness".

Whatever human speculation may think, the Bible explicitly maintains that man can be restored to the Christian life only through the grace of God, manifested in the redeeming love of Christ and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. The law of God is most important for man's moral conduct, for man lives morally only when he lives in harmony with God's will as his standard. But the law of God cannot give new life.[1] It may prepare the way for it as it indicates to man that by himself he is unable to live according to God's commands and is in need of assistance outside of himself, if he is to be reconciled to God and capable of living a God-pleasing life. The Christians have learned in faith that God sent Christ into the world "to reconcile the world to Himself",[2] to permit man to regain the righteousness and divine favor he had forfeited. Vicariously Christ's perfect obedience and sacrificial death on the Cross have redeemed man from his earthly dilemma. "Jesus Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds."[3] This is the basis for the creation of a new life in

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[1]Romans 3:20.

[2]II Corinthians 5:19.

[3]Titus 2:14.

man; however, we are cognizant of Christ's references concerning the necessity of going to the Father in order to send the Holy Spirit[1] that He should be the Creator of new life on earth, subjectively renewing man even as Christ had objectively already made all things new. Thus, God did not leave His people alone. Since the day of Pentecost, when God so graciously poured out His Holy Spirit upon the disciples, the Holy Spirit has been among us with His renewing and sanctifying powers. Therefore, we are to be "His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works".[2]

It is obvious that these Scriptural tenets about God's redemptive work in Christ and His creation of the Christian life through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit are fundamental for Christian ethics. It is paramount that the conduct of a Christian must be based upon faith in Christ, who has redeemed him through His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that he may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness. That he cannot by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called him by the Gospel, enlightened him with His gifts, sanctified and kept him with

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[1]John 16:7.

[2]Ephesians 2:10.

Jesus Christ in the one true faith.[1] In this faith he knows that no matter how impotent and vacillating his efforts may be, he will be sustained by a gracious God. He knows, "that all things work together for good to them that love God."[2]

Conversion

The ethical responsibility a religious counselor will feel is his and the procedures he will use in assisting an individual in restoring himself to the Christian life will be greatly influenced by the specific parts he feels man and God have in this restoration. In the first place, he may feel man can fulfill what the theologians may call conversion by his own powers. Again, it has been held that both God and man cooperate in bringing about this change for the good, the sinner either beginning the task and God completing it, or God making the beginning and man himself completing it. Finally, although rational man is fully capable of a renewed life this turning from the anti-divine, anti-ethical and the selfish to God, to a service of love and righteousness is purely a gift of divine grace.[3] Specifically this is accomplished by the Holy Spirit operating through the divine means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Charles

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[1]Luther, The Small Catechism, Triglot, p. 545.

[2]Romans 8:28.

[3]II Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8,9.

Kingsley in Hypatia tells the story of a Greek intellectual of Jewish descent who heard of the great fame of Augustine's preaching. He traveled to far North Africa to hear him. But when he heard Augustine allegorizing the Old Testament to find Christ going far beyond Philo, he turned away. But then he thought, "What if he were right after all?"[1] A "perhaps" can be an intriguing inducement to further search, though it cannot of itself produce repentance unto faith and a restored life in Christ.

The method of God's grace is to deal with man as the rational creature he is, utilizing his intellectual, emotional and volitional capacities which can be instructed and converted. God makes full use of the psychic endowments of man.[2] Through the illuminating work of the Law, God prepares the way for the Gospel message. Before man will have any desire to change his evil actions and turn to Christ for grace and forgiveness, he must realize his rebellious acts and repent of them. To convince man that because of his sins he is not in accord with the Lord and in this state he cannot lead the new life of love, the Holy Spirit uses the Law, which shows man his sins.[3] When man mirrors his life

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[1]Emil Cailliet, The Christian Approach to Culture, p. 1.

[2]Romans 10:17.

[3]Romans 3:10.

against the commandments of God and this is done effectively, he becomes conscious of his sins and realizes their full implications. In turn he is moved to sorrow and contrition for having offended his God and having lived contrary to His divine wishes. Such a knowledge of sin, such a sense of God's displeasure, and the realization of the impossibility of self-restoration are indispensable prerequisites for turning to the Christian life. No person will desire to change if he does not realize the incongruity of his actions. No one will desire forgiveness if he does not know that he is a sinner, or does not feel remorse for what he has done, or if he still maintains the belief that he can save and help himself. Faith cannot enter a secure and self-satisfied heart, nor a heart that is thoroughly in love with and engrossed in sin. The Law of God prepares the way but does not reveal the Saviour, offer positive assistance and work faith in the hearts of men. Man, left to his own ingenuities, desires, and the Law of God, would despair. Nevertheless, when the Law of God has accomplished its purpose in working contrition in the heart of man, the Holy Ghost comes with the positive facet of God's Word, the Gospel, with its message of divine grace, forgiveness of sins through Christ, full of life-giving and life-restoring power. After the Law had awakened Luther's conscience in the monastery, his fundamental question was, "How can I find a gracious God?" The Gospel

performed its efficacious task so effectively, Luther wrote concerning the Gospel in the sixty-second of the Ninety-five Theses, "The true treasure of the Church is the holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God."[1]

Thus the Spirit works through the Gospel in a mysterious, creative way bringing about new understanding and new powers within the will and inner emotions.[2] When the absolutely free, universal and always efficacious, although not always effective invitation of the Holy Spirit is effective, it works in the heart of man an acceptance of its invitation.[3] It creates faith in the heart of man.

Where this faith has been created in the heart of man, there the new life exists. To be sure it may be weak, but it is there; a new man has been born. The "old man" has by no means been extirpated. He, too, is still there and will continue to be associated with man as long as he lives, but he has been driven from the center of the periphery and the tendency of the renewed will is to oppose the sinful inclinations of the heart and submit with increasing determination to Christ. Man has been renewed. Repentance, complete change of heart and mind have taken place. Man has turned

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[1]Theodore Laetsch, (ED) The Abiding Word, Vol. II, p. 347.

[2]Ephesians 1:19; John 6:29.

[3]Isaiah 55:1; Mark 16:15; Hebrews 4:12; Romans 1:16; Acts 7:51; I Peter 2:9.

away from sin, from self-love and turned to God. Whenever a new life has been initiated in man, it exists by virtue of an act of divine creation and man's part has been a purely passive one. Nevertheless, his personality has not been violated, for all along it was possible for him to will otherwise and resist the Holy Ghost and reject the offered grace of God.[1]

After conversion, man's renewed will cooperates with the Holy Spirit. "For after the Holy Ghost has wrought and accomplished this, and man's will has been changed and renewed by His divine power and working alone, then the new will of man is an instrument and organ of God the Holy Ghost, so that he not only accepts grace, but also cooperates with the Holy Ghost in the works which follow."[2]

Faith

Man's conversion has been designated the "bestowal of faith".[3] The starting point of the Christian life is faith in our merciful and forgiving God, as He is revealed in Christ, the Saviour of men. Salvation and the renewal of life have been made possible for all men, but the individual person must appropriate for himself by faith the blessings

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[1]Klotsche, p. 166.

[2]Luther, Triglot, p. 791.

[3]Mueller, p. 336.

which have been secured for him by Christ.[1]

As the concept of faith is contemplated it is easy to confuse the Scriptural meaning of faith with the meaning it has been given in the other realms of life. "Classical Greek and Biblical Greek differ in their use of the term. Both the Greeks and the Romans recognized and even worshipped pistis, fides, faith; but the meaning which they connect with this term, when used in its passive sense, is 'reliability, trustworthiness, fidelity, credibility of matters and persons' - or, when used in its active sense, 'confidence, trust, conviction', either as bestowed upon others or as enjoyed from others. Even when used with reference to religious matters, Roman and Greek writers express by 'faith in the gods' merely the universal or national recognition of the existence of deities and the acceptance of their power and supernatural influence. The expression is never used to express or to designate personal trust in divine favor and mercy. 'Faith in the gods' with them never signifies firm reliance upon and confiding trust in a gracious God. Rather does it represent the commonplace idea and attitude over and against the Unseen, the Supernatural. The Roman goddess Fides was by no stretch of the imagination a personification of the Christian faith."[2]

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[1]Mark 16:15,16.

[2]Theodore Laetsch, (Ed), The Abiding Word, Vol.I, p. 191.

In a more pragmatic vein we see that all cooperative enterprises in our daily existence are based upon faith. In fact, faith makes many of these enterprises possible. Without faith they could neither originate nor continue to function. In all of our inter-personal relationships faith enters in. A high proportion of our routine activity is dependent on faith. We must have faith in the banker, builder, surgeon, the builder of our automobile and the driver of the other car. Yes, we must have faith in ourselves. We could not prove in advance that any of these persons or things will fulfill their distinct missions, but we must have faith in them. Although many aspects of these forms of faith are included in the Scriptural essence of faith, its meaning and significance is much more involved.

Faith that saves and restores is an experience which involves the entire personality. It involves cognition, emotion, volition. It is a matter of knowledge, assent and confidence. Christian faith is more than knowledge or assent to a truth about the nature of God, His relationship to man and the truths of the Gospel. For these beliefs are found among the unbelievers and even in the devils.[1] Although it includes such knowledge and assent, it is primarily personal trust and confidence in the wonderful message of the Gospel

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[1] Romans 1:19,20; Luke 4:34.

that God for Christ's sake is gracious to all who believe in the "Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me".[1]

To have faith in God is to put one's trust in Him rather than oneself or someone else for one's salvation. As indicated by the Greek word πιστεύειν, which etymologically in the moral and religious reference in the New Testament signifies "to have confidence in, to rely upon, to rest securely upon" Him. Paul expresses such confidence: "For I know whom I have believed and I am sure that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me."[2] The Augsburg Confession writes: "The term 'faith' does not signify merely the knowledge of history... but signifies a faith which believes... also the effect of the history - namely, that we have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins through Christ."[3]

Moreover, it is the nature of faith that it not only involves complete dependence upon Christ, but the believer also surrenders himself unreservedly to Him. This is done humbly as man renounces his own self-centered will and willingly obeys and serves in love the Will of God.

Characteristic of faith is that it always requires an

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[1]Galatians 2:20.

[2]II Timothy 1:12.

[3]Augsburg Confession, Article XX, 23.

object in which it may place its trust, whether this be an idol, money, the virtue of one's personal accomplishments, or the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Thus, those individuals who may trust in an idol have real faith and confidence. But because they have the wrong object, it is a false faith. Faith can be a salutary experience but to say that any kind of faith will save and restore the life of man is as fallacious and deceiving as to say that anything a person eats will nourish and sustain him. It depends upon what you eat; so it depends upon what you believe, and in what you put your trust and confidence.

From this "it is clear why the Law must be excluded as an object of saving faith. The divine Law has no promise of grace attached to it, but promises life and salvation on the basis of its complete fulfillment, as a reward of personal merit."[1] Faith in Christ, indeed, prompts us to observe the commandments of God, but it does not trust in them.

Furthermore, the object of faith is not simply God in his almighty power, goodness and mercy, but Christ and the merits of His redemption are the content of the Gospel and also the object of our faith.[2] "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" is the theme of the New Testament. Whoever denies

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[1]Mueller, p. 324; Luke 10:28; Galatians 3:12.

[2]John 3:16,36.

the Son denies the Father also, for He will be known and believed only in the Son.[1] But Christ is the object of faith not as a miracle worker, nor as a teacher and prophet who reveals the divine will, or as a good man, but as the crucified, risen and living Christ who became our Redeemer and still dwells among us. For the individual, Christ is the object of faith not just because He is the Saviour of the world but because He has become his personal Saviour. Thus faith is a personal relationship. It is impossible that one should trust in something for another. For this reason each person must believe for himself. "The righteous shall live by faith."[2]

Justification

"As soon as the contrite sinner believes the divine promises of grace which for Christ's sake are offered to him in the Gospel, or as soon as he puts his trust in the vicarious satisfaction which Christ has made for the sins of the world by His perfect obedience, he is justified or declared righteous before God.[3] This is the so-called subjective justification or the personal application, through faith, of the merits which Christ has secured for the whole

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[1]John 8:18; 12:44.

[2]Romans 1:17.

[3]Romans 3:23,24.

world by His substitutionary atonement. (Objective justification)."[1]

The glorious meaning of the central doctrine of the Christian religion, justification by faith alone, which was first stated by St. Paul and reaffirmed most explicitly by Luther, has been needlessly obscured by theological controversy. Perhaps it can be illuminated by considering what it denies as well as what it affirms. It denies that man is made righteous or saved by virtue of his good works or perfect obedience to the Law of God. "For we hold that man is justified by faith apart from works of Law."[2] Negatively, justification by faith asserts that it is impossible for men to save themselves or perform meritorious acts toward their salvation. Positively, justification consists of non-imputation or forgiveness of sins, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and reconciliation with God. Man alienated from God by his sins, has no hope unless his sins are forgiven and he is restored to divine favor. In Christ, God has graciously made it possible for the barrier of sin to be removed and man to be returned to Himself. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."[3] Man's

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[1] Mueller, p. 367.

[2] Romans 3:28.

[3] II Corinthians 5:19.

reconciliation was more than the forgiveness of sins and the removal of punishment. Highly significant for our ethical considerations is the fact that it is "nothing less than the re-establishment of that fellowship and filial relation with God which was broken through sin."[1]

Justification is not a process, a moral transformation, or a matter of being made righteous, but it is a judicial act of God, taking place outside of the sinner, by which God freely and out of pure grace, for Christ's sake, absolves him from all his sins, pronounces and declares him righteous, who has no righteousness of his own but trusts in the righteousness of Christ.[2] Furthermore, it is not partial or progressive, but complete and perfect. Nothing needs to be added on the part of man or the Church. There are degrees of faith but there are no degrees of justification. The moment that there is faith in the heart, by which man trusts in God's promises of grace, he has full forgiveness for all of his sins. Thus forgiveness of sins and justification is not a future blessing man must wait for, but it is a present possession, which he may have and hold in its completeness as long as he continues in faith.

"Therefore, since we are justified by faith we have

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[1]Gustav Aulen, The Faith of the Christian Church, p. 290.

[2]Romans 4:5-8.

peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."[1] Man no longer has to fear God, but in faith He is a loving God, who has received mankind into a mystical union with Himself. This is true, for an immediate consequence of justification is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, of the Holy Trinity in the being of justified man. Paul writes: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are."[2] Jesus also spoke of this when He said: "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."[3] This union not only has significance for our temporal existence but it is capable of becoming even more complete and intimate in the certain[4] life to come when we shall escape the exigencies and imperfections of this life and "become partakers of the divine nature".[5]

From the viewpoint of Christian ethics it is important to remember that the Christian still finds sin in his life. It has not been eradicated from man's nature and life because

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[1]Romans 5:1.

[2]I Corinthians 3:16,17.

[3]John 14:13.

[4]Romans 2:5.

[5]II Peter 1:4.

of his regeneration and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. It is still present in man as a defect and as an affect, as a deficiency as well as an evil inclination, but it has been dethroned from its central position. Man must wage a life-long struggle against the remnants of sin in himself which would break once more his fellowship with God. The Christian, as Luther said, is "at once just and a sinner". Its continual presence is a fact, but its dominion and tyranny over the intellect and will have been broken. The Christian, as far as he is the new man, is free to serve His God in grateful love and liberty. Paul gives expression to both freedoms, freedom from the dominion of sin and freedom from the yoke of the Law: "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."[1]

The spiritual blindness which was characteristic of man in his unjustified state and deterred him from discerning spiritual things has been displaced and through the power of the Spirit he now can recognize the things that are of God.[2]

The impotency of the will has been removed and true freedom has been restored once again, so that man can will the things that God wills.[3] In fact, as God pours His love

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[1]Romans 6:14.

[2]I John 2:20,27; I Corinthians 2:15.

[3]John 8:32,36.

into man's heart through the Holy Spirit, His love awakens in man a love for Him and a desire to do His will.

Man's self-love and selfish egocentricity have been replaced and are no longer compatible with the new man. As the love of God in Christ fills his believing heart, he now is free to reflect this love both to God and to his neighbor. For our specific purposes we also mention the conscience which also has been renewed. Nevertheless, it is still under the influence of sin and is not restored to absolute trustworthiness.

Finally, whoever has been justified is filled with a fervent hope of everlasting life. His sins forgiven, he is a member of God's family; he has received the Spirit of adoption, "himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with him".[1] Certainly a chain of privileges and blessings have their foundation in the declarations of justification graciously received from the mercy-seat of God. Even as the doctrine of justification is the articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae[2] the same applies to Christian ethics.

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[1] Romans 8:16,17.

[2] "the article by which the church stands or falls."

Sanctification

The term sanctification, as with many other theological terms, is given various shades of meaning. These varied interpretations have a tendency to confuse some of the vital facets of this most important doctrine. Therefore for greater specificity we shall distinguish between its use in a wider and narrower sense.

In its wider sense, it includes all of the work of divine grace by which the Holy Spirit leads the rebellious and self-centered sinner to faithful and loving fellowship with his God, culminating in spiritual perfection in life eternal. "In other words, sanctification in its wider sense includes every work of God by which He separates a sinner from the lost and condemned world and makes him His own, such as the bestowal of faith, justification, sanctification in its narrower sense, or the inward change in man by which he becomes holy, his preservation in faith to the end, and his final glorification on the day of Judgment."[1]

"In its narrower, or strict sense, sanctification denotes the inward spiritual transformation of the believer, which follows upon and is inseparably joined with justification."[2]

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[1]Mueller, p. 384.

[2]Ibid.

In our discussion on the effects and blessings of justification, the close kinship between justification and sanctification is most evident. Once again we can clarify the meaning if we remember what it denies as well as what it affirms. Sanctification in the narrower sense, to which we shall limit the remainder of our discussion, never precedes justification but always follows it, even as good works do not precede faith but follow it. "But first faith is kindled in us in conversion by the Holy Ghost from the hearing of the Gospel. This lays hold of God's grace in Christ, by which the person is justified. Then, when the person is justified, he is also renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works then follows."[1]

If this order were reversed and sanctification was made the cause of justification of the sinner, this would deny the central doctrine of the Christian faith and would base salvation and the restoration of man on work-righteousness. Thus we see these two doctrines are closely joined together, but justification is the source of sanctification.

We wish to reiterate that even as God the Holy Spirit works faith in our hearts, so also the Holy Spirit works, operates, and effects in the believer this sanctification as

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[1] Formula of Concord, Triglot, p. 929.

the result of faith.[1] "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."[2] Negatively the Holy Spirit prompts and induces man to "put to death the deeds of the body".[3] Positively, the "fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control".[4] All of these virtues are created in us, strengthened in us, and developed in us through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Compulsory laws and regulations may assist to alter the external conduct of man, but it is the sanctifying power of faith in Christ that truly reforms the moral attitude of man and renews the image of God in our lives.[5]

Nevertheless, while in conversion man is purely passive, in sanctification he is fully capable to cooperate with the Holy Spirit by virtue of the spiritual power and renewal bestowed on him. In living according to the Lord's will and doing good works, the Christian is not a mere automaton, but he is consciously active. It is man himself who suppresses the evil desires, resists the temptations, wills and does

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[1]Ephesians 2:10; I Thessalonians 5:23,24.

[2]Philippians 1:13.

[3]Romans 8:13.

[4]Galatians 5:22 ff.

[5]II Corinthians 5:15; Ephesians 4:24.

what is pleasing to God; but supporting him in all of his endeavors of love is the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

The conception of sanctification as a later phase of the Christian life has indicated to some that it is a specific state of holiness or perfection which can be attained. Unfortunately, this has induced them to think they are in an irrevocable state of grace or the proud possessors of permanent holiness. In reality, the man who has become the new creature in faith and desires to live unto God in the newness of spiritual life is still a sinner and very much in need of daily repentance and forgiveness. In fact, this will be his need throughout his entire life. Even though a person is a believing child of God, he must confess with St. Paul: "For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh."[1] If a person, on the other hand, claims to have reached the state of holiness or perfection, he manifests the idolatrous pride and self-love he thinks he has subdued.

Sanctification is not a state of perfect holiness; it is a gradual process of development through which the Christians "are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ..... until we all attain to the unity of

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[1] Romans 7:18.

the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."[1] Paul seems to substantiate this view: "Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect", he says, "but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."[2] The Christian life is continued activity; it is not a finished product which we can acquire.

It is also important to remember that santification not only varies in different individuals but also in the same Christian at different times. It varies according to the strength or the weakness of faith. The weak faith is prone to succumb to temptation more easily than the strong faith, is less productive of good works, and gives way to fear and doubt in the face of danger. Therefore, it must be a constant effort to grow in faith, so that we may grow also in the holiness of life, "to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man".[3]

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[1]Ephesians 4:15,13.

[2]Philippians 3:12-14.

[3]Ephesians 2:16.

At no time can the Christian be satisfied with his present situation. There is no place for spiritual or moral complacency or cessation of moral growth. The Christian is constrained to strive forward. To stand in the status quo means to go backward. Sanctification is a progressive victory over sin and the forces of evil.

In respect to the Christian life Luther says that it "is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise; we are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it; the process is not yet finished, but it is going on; this is not the end, but it is the road; all does not yet gleam with glory, but all is being purified."[1]

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[1] A. J. Holman, (Ed.), Works of Martin Luther, Vol. III, p. 31.

PART II: THE ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEY

THE SURVEY

The basic postulates and principles for Christian ethics have been set forth in numerous treatises. Usually they have been presented to emphasize and apply the tenets of various religious orientations. Nevertheless, these principles, as intended in many cases, have served the clergyman as a guide to ethical conduct as he strives to accomplish his mission of bringing the Gospel of Christ to his flock and serving them in their manifold needs. In recent years chaplain/ministerial counseling ethics have been given greater consideration.

In considering the application of Christian ethical principles to the practice of chaplain/ministerial counseling, it is most apparent that there are many situations where ethical responsibility and behavior is clear and definite. The counselor is either ethical or he is not. For example, a clergyman assists a couple adopt a child, but does so for financial gain, it is obvious that he is involved in unethical counseling practices.

When, however, there are two principles, two forces which are both valid and right in themselves but cannot exist simultaneously, and the claim of each is equally justified but the right of each is pushed into a wrong because it

ignores the right of the other, you have a quandary demanding specific ethical action. Thus, if the rights of an individual counselee are in opposition to the rights of society, the chaplain/ministerial counselor is confronted with the necessity of making a decision which intimately involves his ethical beliefs and his approach to the counseling ministry. To be sure, in this area there are considerations in which there is a good deal of uncertainty and divergence of opinion. It is the purpose of this survey to learn more about some of these less commonly recognized and determined aspects of chaplain/ministerial counseling ethics. In an attempt to obtain a better understanding about these ethical considerations, the following questionnaire and accompanying letter were sent to a group of clergymen in all sections of the country and one in Canada representing the following Protestant denominations: Lutheran, Episcopal, Methodist, Congregational, Congregational Christian, Unitarian, American Baptist, Southern Baptist, Conservative Baptist, Presbyterian (US), Presbyterian (USA), Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, and United Church of Canada. Their types of ministry are the parish ministry, the military chaplaincy (Army and Navy), the hospital chaplaincy, the institutional chaplaincy, the prison chaplaincy and the Veterans Administration hospital chaplaincy.

21 January 1957

My dear Chaplain:

A study is being conducted to learn more about the less commonly recognized and determined aspects of chaplain/ministerial ethics. The enclosed questionnaire lists some situations that many of us have faced. It is hoped you will answer the proposed questions in any way you care to answer them. You might feel that some of these questions have stereotype answers or perhaps should be elucidated by our legal colleagues, but experience in this area seems to indicate that our chaplain/ministerial ethics are more involved and advanced. Thus it is hoped the answers will come directly from you. Your conclusions and illustrations from your successful or unsuccessful handling of these problems will be greatly appreciated.

It is important to remember that each clergyman's opinions and practices are influential in determining what our chaplain/ministerial ethics really are, and that is why your opinions are so very important to the study.

Your identity will be kept anonymous and you will not be quoted in any way.

Thank you for your valuable time, effort and assistance.

Gratefully yours,

ALFRED R. SAEGER, JR.

Please Reply to:

Chaplain Alfred R. Saeger, Jr.
918 Belmont Street
Watertown 72, Massachusetts

Denomination: _____.

Type of ministry engaged in: _____.

Number of years in ministry: _____.

Have you had Clinical Pastoral Training? _____.

1. What is your ethical responsibility when you have definite knowledge that one of your counselees is a narcotic addict or indulges in extra-marital sexual activities?

2. What is your ethical responsibility when you have definite proof that a colleague of yours, who is an active clergyman, is an alcoholic or indulges in extra-marital sexual activities?

3. What is your ethical responsibility to one of your counselees when you definitely believe this person is homicidal and/or suicidal, and the responsible authorities will not attempt to take measures to protect your counselee or society?

4. What is your ethical responsibility when a counselee relates to you on a strictly confidential basis that he has committed: (a) burglary; (b) murder?

5. What is your ethical responsibility when one of your unmarried counselees becomes pregnant during the period you are counseling with her and informs you that she has arranged to have a criminal abortion? She forbids you to divulge her professional confidence?

6. What is your ethical responsibility when one of your counselees does not know that he has been medically diagnosed as a terminal patient?

7. What is your ethical responsibility when a counselee whom you have known for some time reveals acts of disloyalty and sabotage against the United States, and demands that you keep such information secret by his right of privileged communication?

THE ANALYSIS OF THE SEVEN EQUIVOCAL QUESTIONS

The tabulations and brief analysis have been limited to fifty of the most comprehensive and carefully considered replies. The deletions will in no way alter the import of the results of the survey but will facilitate a percentage exposition of the responses.

The informants have been in their various ministries for an average of more than fourteen years. They range from two young gentlemen who are in their second year in the ministry to one of the most informative participants who exhibited forty-three fruitful years of service to his Lord and fellowman. Approximately forty-eight percent of these clergymen have had rather extensive clinical pastoral training with several of them now serving in a supervisory or student training capacity. Twenty-one percent have had limited clinical pastoral training and thirty-one percent have had no specific clinical pastoral training.

It should be emphasized that the situations presented in the survey questionnaire were not hypothetical products of the imagination, but actual counseling enigmas that have occurred in our counseling ministries.

Question 1. What is your ethical responsibility when you have definite knowledge that one of your counselees is a narcotic addict or indulges in extra-marital sexual activities?

There was an almost unanimous opinion - that is, ninety-six percent felt that some action seemed indicated in this situation and they explicitly and implicitly expressed their personal responsibility. This feeling was exemplified to such a degree that many seemed to take it for granted and automatically proceeded to state what they felt should be done. The other four percent did not feel it was their responsibility to interfere. However, one of the latter informants suggested the narcotic addict should be referred for medical treatment but "in extra-marital sexual activities I can't help but feel that it is none of my business until the offending party seeks my help or the partner offended against seeks counsel or help."[1*]

Fifty-six percent of the clergymen definitely expressed these two problems were symptomatic of "deeper problems,"[2] and their "responsibility was to find the cause, go behind the external if I can and get the whole personality rightly related to God."[3]

Fifty-eight percent definitely distinguished between the narcotic addict and the extra-marital sexual activities

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[1]No. Four - *In order to preserve the confidential character of the informants all questionnaire quotations will be made by number rather than name.

[2]No. Thirty

[3]No. Twenty-nine

in determining their ethical responsibility. There was a greater degree of readiness to refer the narcotic addict, but on the other hand many displayed much more confidence in their personal abilities to deal with the extra-marital activities. One of them, who expressed his feelings that these matters should be kept absolutely confidential said, "The only course of action would be direct persuasion either to seek medical help in the case of the addict, or to desist from illicit sexual activities."[1] Nevertheless, approximately seventy-eight percent indicated the necessity for referral to either medical, psychiatric, institutional or the proper civil authorities. If the referral is impossible the pastor should at least obtain a consultation with a representative of one of the above.

Twenty-eight percent in dealing with the narcotic addict mentioned their responsibility to society as well as to their counselee. Fourteen percent indicated they would report him to the proper authorities even against his will.

It was most apparent that many of the informants were struggling with the problem of being judgmental in their counseling. "While I disapprove of both of these things, I do not believe that I would take a condemnatory or judgmental attitude as long as I was counseling the person."[2] Neverthe-

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[1]No. Thirty-five

[2]No. Fifteen

less their replies exhibited a degree of ambivalence. They didn't want to be judgmental or condemning in their attitudes but their actual counseling procedures frequently did not coincide with their preferred conceptual ideas for proper counseling.

Fifty-eight percent of the clergymen approached these two specific problems from their religious frame of reference. The other forty-two percent made no specific reference to religion but employed what we might call secular counseling techniques. Those who brought religion into their counseling frequently felt a compulsion to bring the sinful significance of the acts to the attention of the counselees, have them repent and in some cases make the proper restitutions. "I would consider it my ethical responsibility in dealing with a confirmed narcotic addict or one who indulges in extra-marital sexual activities to confess his guilt first of all and to make restitution for his sins to prove his repentance. If this is not sincerely and humbly done by the counselled when definite knowledge is obtained and shown, then the pastor cannot help the sinner."[1]

Ten percent expressed the view that "the spiritual problems are in the field of the pastor, but the physical and social are in the field of the doctor, the family counselor and often the psychiatrist."[2]

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[1]No. Forty-two

[2]No. Thirteen

Less than ten percent mentioned the possibility of involving the family and more specifically the wives or husbands in the counseling except in extreme cases. However, many indicated the families and environment undoubtedly were instrumental in helping to bring about the narcotic addiction or extra-marital sexual activities. Only one counselor felt he had to tell the offended spouse concerning the infidelity of his mate.

Question 2. What is your ethical responsibility when you have definite proof that a colleague of yours, who is an active clergyman, is an alcoholic or indulges in extra-marital sexual activities?

There was a definite tendency to associate this question with question number one. Twenty-two percent felt there was no essential difference in the manner the pastoral counselor should deal with a layman or clergyman. Twelve percent definitely stated there was a difference and the clergyman should be treated more stringently because of his ministerial office. Except for one counselor who did not feel an ethical responsibility to counsel with his colleague unless he first approached him for counsel, the other informants definitely felt they had an ethical responsibility to their colleague. Thirty-two associated this responsibility to the church and society as well. However, only four percent indicated they had a responsibility to God in this matter.

Fifty-six percent explicitly felt it was their responsibility to counsel with their colleague first and if not successful in their efforts they should refer the matter to higher church authorities; ten percent of this group said the basis for their counsel would be Matthew 18:15-20. Twenty-eight percent felt they should attempt to assist him through personal counsel but did not indicate the advisability of referral if unsuccessful. Half of this group thought the matter should be kept absolutely confidential. Twelve percent indicated the matter should be reported to church authorities or the bishop immediately. Four percent felt incapable of assisting their brother and thought he should be referred to some other capable person or group for special counsel. One of these gentleman said, "Should my colleague indulge in extra-marital sexual activities I doubt that he would confide in me for counsel."[1]

Seventy-eight percent did not distinguish between alcoholism and indulging in extra-marital sexual activities indicating that the problems as far as their ethical responsibility was concerned were basically the same. The remaining twenty-two percent referred to the problems separately but only to offer different measures for helping the colleague; namely, fourteen percent recommended Alcoholics Anonymous and ten percent recommended psychiatric or medical help for

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[1] No. Twenty-four

an alcoholic. Six percent recommended medical counsel for the sexual maladjustment.

Eighty percent recommended explicitly and implicitly that their colleague should be given every chance. Twenty percent were condemnatory and recommended resignation from the ministry and the church immediately. "A spiritual leader has no place in such a position if he indulges in these things for he can undo all the good his colleagues are trying to do."[1]

Six percent of the informants were concerned about maintaining a friendly relationship with their colleague and for this reason indicated a hesitation to speak to him about the matter.

Question 3. What is your ethical responsibility to one of your counselees when you definitely believe this person is homicidal and/or suicidal, and the responsible authorities will not attempt to take measures to protect your counselee or society?

In response to this all agreed that they had some responsibility to take action in this case. However, six percent questioned the "pastors legal right or necessary training to diagnose these conditions and to prescribe a course of action and treatment over what is obviously the diagnosis and prescribed treatment of 'responsible authorities'. The pastor is able to suggest only on the basis of his experience or any information passed to him which might indicate that

[1] No. Twenty-six

there is a seriousness beyond that of which the 'responsible authorities' are aware."[1] Sixty-six percent replied that they would make additional appeals to elicit assistance from the church, legal, civil or medical authorities. Fifty-five percent of these suggested that they felt this was unusual and authorities of one kind or another would normally be available to assist. "It may in the course of the counseling become apparent that there are deeper reasons for this man's behavior which are beyond my abilities to handle and call for medical or psychiatric treatment."[2] The necessity for psychiatric and medical treatment in cases such as this was felt by most of the participants. In fact, seventy-four percent of the replies expressed the advisability of referring the counselee to a psychiatrist, agency or institution capable and willing to assist him. A number of the men thought that the clergyman's chief concern should be the spiritual, the individual's relationship to God through Christ, but that he should not try to assume the responsibilities which were vested in the medical profession or civil authorities. Less than ten percent implied that they would attempt to handle the situation without the assistance of outside counsel or referral. However, fifty percent favored personal and follow-

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[1] No. Seventeen

[2] No. Nine

up counseling in addition to the necessary referrals.

Only about a third specifically mentioned anything about protecting the life of the counselee and about a fourth of the replies were concerned about the members of society who may be endangered. This seemed to be taken for granted. However, less than ten percent distinguished between a person being suicidal or homicidal. The others simply placed them in the same category. Several of the more inexperienced men suggested the solicitation of members of the counselee's family or some immediate friends to assist them "keep watch" over him so that he wouldn't harm himself or others. Specific mention of the clergyman providing religious counseling was limited to approximately twenty-four percent of the replies. Nevertheless, those who did approach the problem with this in mind were most concerned, as shown by this statement, "It is also one's responsibility to both personify and express the Lord's concern for a supposedly defeated life, and show that there can be 'victory in Jesus.'"[1] Ten percent felt it would be necessary to have him institutionalized for treatment even against his own wishes or those of his guardians.

Among many pithy remarks were the following: "I don't know... I would just sit tight and hope for the best."[2] "I would probably enlist assistance and attempt to restrain the

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[1] No. Twenty-nine

[2] No. Five

man with force."[1] "People do not want to commit suicide with no cause. Therefore counsel in whatever manner you are capable and make the necessary arrangements for the most expeditious referral."[2]

Question 4. What is your ethical responsibility when a counselee relates to you on a strictly confidential basis that he has committed: (a) burglary; (b) murder?

Twenty-four percent would do their very best to counsel the man to turn himself into the authorities, but in both a burglary or murder case they would deny the counselee's request for privileged communication and do something. Of this group, eighteen percent would report this action to proper authorities such as the police and district attorney. The other six percent qualified their remarks by indicating they would not reveal information received in a confessional, but if they received the information outside of the confessional they would deny the request for privileged communication.

Seventy-two percent felt they were bound to keep the information absolutely confidential but expressed their responsibility to counsel the person to turn himself in and make the necessary restitutions.

Sixty-two percent of the informants were most definite in emphasizing the use of religion in assisting the counselee

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[1] No. Thirty-three

[2] No. Thirty-six

re-establish his relationship with his God, himself and his fellowman through sincere repentance, forgiveness and restitution. Repeatedly it was mentioned that the counselees would turn themselves in and make the necessary restitutions if they were truly repentant and sorry for what they had done. The remaining four percent indicated they would use their own judgement about informing the authorities, and this would depend on the nature of the murder, the intent, how long ago it had been committed, and whether or not a third party had been accused of the murder. If a third party were accused, then they would feel bound to report the murder or burglary to the authorities. To illustrate this point of view one informant cited this case: "A man confessed to me that he had killed a man in a brawl in Russia, and fled to America. Now after many years he had become a Christian and wanted forgiveness. Nothing could be gained by turning himself over to the authorities. In such a case only a confession to God is necessary."[1]

A fourth of the group emphasized the necessity for consistent followup counseling after the confessions to see that the individual grows in the sanctified life.

Only thirty-two percent felt a need to distinguish between a burglary and a murder. However, in their approach to the problems they differed only in degree from the sixty-eight percent who treated the problems in the same way.

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[1] No. Thirteen

Fifteen percent distinguished between confidential and confessional information. However, as indicated previously, half of these still did not change their opinions about breaking the seal of confession.

Many of the responses directly and indirectly showed a deep concern for the rehabilitation and the moral and spiritual growth of the individual. Six percent stated that the revelation or maintenance of the confidence was not the chief concern but that it was the person involved. Although it never was explicitly stated, a number of the replies suggested the counselor was conducting his counseling ministry in an irresponsible manner if her permitted himself to receive information of a confidential nature and then specifically or inadvertently promised to keep it strictly confidential when it was not morally or charitably proper for him to do so.

Question 5. What is your ethical responsibility when one of your unmarried counselees becomes pregnant during the period you are counseling with her and informs you that she has arranged to have a criminal abortion? She forbids you to divulge her professional confidence?

Unanimously the informants indicated that definite action was mandatory, however, the type of action they advised varied greatly. Of those who definitely committed themselves, thirty-six percent indicated they would do all in their power to have her desist from obtaining the abortion.

However, if she didn't abide by their counsel they felt that was all they could do because of the secrecy of a professional confidence. "There is no course open except to respect and keep the confidence. Undoubtedly, this is a painful position in which to be, but the existence of confidential situations of a professional kind necessitates the possibility of such difficult dilemmas. Of course, there is an absolute obligation to do everything possible to change the counselee's mind and prevent the abortion short of divulging the confidence."[1] Sixty-four percent indicated they would also do all in their power to counsel her to refrain from having the abortion, but if she still insisted on going through with the abortion they would deny her request for professional confidence and make use of every available source to prevent the abortion. Twenty-two percent of this group would report the matter to the authorities.

Fourteen percent were determined that special efforts should be made to apprehend the abortionist and half of these were concerned about preventing not only this specific case but future cases as well.

Eighty percent emphasized personal counsel, and of this group thirty-five percent would appeal to her to have the baby and accept assistance in making arrangements to work through church or social welfare agencies in placing the

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[1] NO. Thirty-five

child for adoption in a Christian home. The religious emphasis decreased in this situation as compared to the previous question. Only thirty-five percent of the clergymen felt a need to point out her sinful acts and assist her in her moral and spiritual growth through repentance and forgiveness. Fourteen percent referred to abortions as murder and another twenty-six percent termed them morally wrong. However, one indicated he didn't like to have abortions automatically referred to as "criminal."[1]

Eighteen percent of the replies stated they would try to help the counselee understand the psychological significance, including a bad conscience, the physical dangers, and the possible legal involvements that are connected with an abortion.

For the most part, the replies displayed a very charitable attitude although a few of them were definitely judgmental. Ten percent thought it would be advisable to consult with the young man involved and half of these felt they should make an effort to get him to marry the young lady.

The matter of implication was mentioned by only one person, "Although the information is confidential, the crime has not yet been committed and is not confidential. You might call the counselee's attention to this fact. This implicates you in the crime to be committed. You have no right to become so implicated."[2]

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[1] No. Thirty-three
[2] No. Forty

Question 6. What is your ethical responsibility when one of your counselees does not know that he has been diagnosed as a terminal patient?

The informants indicated their greatest divergence in opinion in the discussion of this case. Eighteen percent felt it was primarily the minister's responsibility, as was expressed by one of the men, "I feel it is completely a pastoral problem and I feel it is the pastor's job to prepare such a person to die as a Christian."[1] On the other hand sixteen percent specifically stated, "It is not my responsibility to tell him - that belongs to the M.D."[2] Another sixteen percent felt the minister should inform his counselee only after consultation with the physician in charge. He has no right to go beyond the physician's wishes.

Twenty-eight percent thought of the minister and physician as a team. The minister was responsible for the religious needs of the patient and the physician was responsible for the medical needs. In this connection twenty percent of this group felt they could prepare the patient for eternity without having to tell him he was a terminal patient. Eight percent felt that it didn't make any difference whether he was terminal or not, the clergyman's responsibility is to prepare him for eternity at all times. "Man's prognosis has

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[1] No. Eleven

[2] No. Two

nothing to do with my relationship to a terminal case or any other case. My constant opportunity to any and all people is to show them that this life is only a temporal thing. A healthy person has no guarantee of tomorrow anyway, it might well terminate before the life of the so-called terminal case."[1] Twelve percent felt that the patient dictates the responsibility as to whether or not he should be told. It is his right to know or not to know about his condition. Six percent indicated that it was entirely impossible to specify any rules; the circumstances dictated the responsibility. Four percent of the replies were so ambiguously and evasively stated it was impossible to decide where they wished to place the responsibility.

Approximately ten percent mentioned that in their experience most terminal patients were aware of their impending deaths. Three clergymen polemically advocated that proper preparation for death, including knowledge of impending death, could be a constructive and salutary experience for the terminal patient. On the other hand the same number emphasized the harmful psychosomatic effects such information may have on the patient. For this reason one of the men said, "I never would tell a person he is going to die."[2]

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[1] No. Forty-three

[2] No. Thirteen

Question 7. What is your ethical responsibility when a counselee whom you have known for some time reveals acts of disloyalty and sabotage against the United States, and demands that you keep such information secret by his right of privileged communication?

More than a third of the informants specifically drew a comparison between this question and question number four. However, the opinions expressed indicated the circumstances in this case altered some of their basic tenets concerning the maintenance of absolute confidence. Fifty-four percent felt that it was their ethical responsibility to report such information. However, they also expressed the advisability of the counselee's turning himself in and they would employ their best modes of persuasion to accomplish this end. Twenty-six percent of this group would divulge this information forthrightly. The other twenty-eight percent would feel obligated to report to the authorities only after extensive religious counsel or careful consideration of the seriousness and circumstances of the disloyalty or sabotage involvements and after an "endeavor to determine whether or not such disloyalty or sabotage is apt to be repeated."[1]

We wish to note that the thirty-six percent who would report the disloyalty acts in question seven, but not the burglary and murder cases in question four, knowingly or in-

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[1]No. Nineteen

advertently gave the explanation for their differentiations. They indicated the implications were more far-reaching and "the good of the whole must be the determining factor,"[1] in the case presented in question seven. As Caiaphas argued, "it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation should not perish."[2] One informant, who had held the seal of the confessional and confidential information as inviolable in question four remarked, "I believe he ought to be exposed to the authorities if you cannot persuade him to do so. The love we owe our fellowmen and country ought to dictate this step."[3]

Thirty-eight percent, two percent more than the group who qualified their use of the inviolability of confidential information, in this case felt bound to respect the counselee's demands that they keep the information secret by his right of privileged communication. Sixteen percent were concerned with persuading the counselee to report himself to the authorities, while keeping the information confidential. Only twenty-two percent, as compared with sixty-two percent in question four, indicated there were religious implications in this problem and advised the proper religious counsel. Eighteen percent distinguished between information received

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[1] No. Twenty-seven

[2] John 11:50

[3] No. Ten

in confidence and that in the confessional. If only in confidence, they automatically felt free and even obligated to report the individual. Approximately twenty percent mentioned in effect, "The minister's obligation to God is obviously prior to that of his country. If this information were revealed in a confessional ministry, I would try my very best to dissuade him from his acts of disloyalty and sabotage, but failing in this, I would not divulge his planned disloyalty."[1]

Eight percent seemed overwhelmed by the problem and were undecided as to what to do and as one said, "it would be a problem that I hope I never have to come to grips with."[2]

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[1]No. Forty-four

[2]No. Thirty-three

CONCLUSION

We would like to discuss the results of the survey questionnaire on the basis of the three counseling techniques which exhibited themselves in the responses: the horizontal, the vertical, and triadic approaches.

The Horizontal Approach

By this approach we have reference to the Counselee - Counselor relationship. The ethical responsibility in this approach as exemplified in the replies was expressed by one of the informants in this way, "It would be my judgement that in the confessional or pastoral counseling relationship the revelation of any kind of offense, no matter what its nature, must remain completely secret or confidential."[1] The informants maintained, although not consistently, that they had no prerogative to violate the professional confidence of the counselee but were bound to maintain absolute secrecy at all times. It was characteristic of this type of counselor to make an attempt to persuade the counselee to divulge his information, turn himself in, and seek the assistance he needs. All of the responsibility was placed in the counselee. The counselor would proceed in his counseling only as far as the counselee would permit him. For the most part the counselors indicated highly sensitive and responsible use of the information received in their counseling ministries. However,

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[1] No. Eleven

in reading some of the responses, the writer could not help feeling that there was a tendency to use the sanctity of the confessional and privileged communication as an escape media. Perhaps we can identify it more specifically by calling it the "Pilate type" who wash their hands when they run into a difficult problem.[1] "I have done all I can. There is nothing else I can do. The court will respect my professional confidence."[2]

Quite naturally these counselors were more willing to refer their clients to any one who would be willing to assist them. "As in most difficult problems like this I generally have a trusted friend or professional colleague to whom I may refer the person or to whom I may go to talk things over. This gives me some protection but it doesn't solve the many ethical dilemmas that we can get into."[3]

The methods employed by these men displayed the least insight, the most equivocal convictions, and little evidence of moral and spiritual concern for the counselee. In fact, we might describe many of their efforts as an ethically neutral and expedient approach to these problems.

The Vertical Approach

This has been referred to as the directive approach and in some circles as the "preacher type" counselor. We felt

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[1] Matthew 27:24 ff.
[2] No. Forty-three
[3] No. Five

some of the responses placed the counselor vertically above the counselee and in the center of the counseling situation. This counselor felt he possessed superior training, more years of experience, higher moral standards, and knew exactly what was best for the counselee. He felt it was his ethical responsibility to specifically spell it out for him. One informant suggested that question number two be handled in this manner, "I counsel with him the first time, add admonishment the second, and lower the boom the third offense."[1] This type of counseling relationship quite consistently dictated a problem-centered as compared to the preferable person-centered approach in its motive and feeling-tone.

Moral and ethical issues were frequently casuistically predetermined and pigeon-holed into dogmatic categories. They felt a definite and even a compulsive need to help and take their counseling responsibilities seriously, but usually on their own terms. But in actual practice their procedures would short-circuit the counseling process, and the counselee would be denied his inalienable right to morally and spiritually mature to his highest potential.

The counselor usually indicated his confidence and ability to counsel and advise in this situation; therefore, there was infrequent use of referral and employment of the best available resources for the counselee. Moreover, this oft-

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[1] No. Twenty-eight

times aggressive, expedient, impersonal, pragmatic, and calculating approach reflected the least understanding, insight and preparation to helpfully counsel in these more involved situations. Judgmental traits, condemnatory attitudes and personal biases provided additional obstacles for a successful counseling relationship.

The Triadic Approach

The majority of the responses sincerely attempted to determine their ethical responsibilities on the basis of the will of God as it has been revealed to us in Christ. We would describe this approach as the God-Counselee-Counselor relationship. Some of the basic principles and points of emphasis were expressed in these responses: "As a Christian pastor and counselor I must certainly keep the highest and ultimate goal in mind, and that is not only salvage a human personality, but bring him into the right and saving relationship with his God and Saviour."[1] "I consider ethical responsibility as dynamic and not static."[2]

Although not always explicitly stated the biblical and Christocentric virtues of faith, hope and love[3] were ever present in an implicit and permeating manner. Contrasted to the ego-centric, self-protecting and problem-centered

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[1]No. Eighteen

[2]No. Twenty-seven

[3]I Corinthians 13

approaches these counselors were altruistic, out-going and counselee-oriented. Furthermore, the counselors evidenced self-acceptance and a trustful acceptance of the person in his present existential situation joined with a desire to assist him become one with his God, one with himself, and one with his neighbor.

In determining their ethical responsibilities the counselors felt it was necessary not only to take into consideration the integrity, rights and freedoms of the whole person, but his relative situation and circumstances as well. The accomplishment of this, however, was not via the rule of thumb technique. There was an eagerness to make possible an inter-active relationship between the counselor and counselee. The counselor respected the counselee as a person, a Thou and not an It, a subject and not an object, a somebody with an integrity, a moral quality and a soul of his own.[1] The counselees were treated as persons who can and do respond. As Paul Tillich says, "'Person' is a moral concept, pointing to a being which we are asked to respect as the bearer of a dignity equal to our own, and which we are not permitted to use as a means for a purpose, because it is purpose in itself."[2] "This is of course a restatement of Kant's second maxim, 'Act

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[1] Martin Buber, Between Man and Man, I an Thou

[2] James L. Adams, (Ed) The Protestant Era, p. 115

so as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in the person of another, always as an end, never as a means only.'"[1]

In their desire to restore the individual to a full and complete psychological and spiritual maturity the counselors did not deny the counselee his personal freedoms and rights but on the other hand they did not take the position of ethical and moral neutralism or a position of ethical irresponsibility. These men were the best informed on the many sources available to them for assisting the counselee and they indicated a willingness to prudently refer but often commented on the necessity for follow-up counseling as well. Generally these men depicted the most thoughtful and responsible moral and spiritual concern for their counselees. Their calm, charitable, and deeply religious approach was apparent in most of the opinions expressed in the replies.

We feel the responses pointed out certain equivocal areas in the concept of privileged communication, by which we mean the counselee expects what he tells the counselor to be held in confidence. Many of the participants indicated that they felt the right of privileged communication means that the counselor has the privilege of deciding whether or not he will reveal to others what is said to him in confidence.

Another portion of the informants felt that all of the

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[1] Fletcher, p. 9

confidential information received in ministerial counseling whether that be in the confessional, private conference, at the sick-bed, or at any time is confessed or said inter nos and must be held in absolute confidence.

We mention still another group who differentiated between information given in a religious confession or in a personal counseling session. As one gentleman stated, "If the information came to me as a spiritual confession I would regard myself as a Vicar of Christ, it would be 'privileged communication' and I could not reveal any part of it."[1] However, for information received outside of the confessional a number of the participants felt free to weigh the factors in the case and use their own judgement in determining their ethical responsibility in this regard.

The following quotations emphasize another equivocal area that apparently needs clarification in the minds of some of our clergy, "The court will respect my professional confidence."[2] "Legally (as I understand) the minister is not liable for with-holding such information from the authorities."[3] "It would be my ethical responsibility to keep this knowledge secret. There isn't even a civil law that will make this difficult to fulfill."[4] Thus a number of the informants

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[1] No. Forty-four
[2] No. Forty-three
[3] No. Twenty-nine
[4] No. Forty-five

explicitly stated that the courts of our land would not expect or demand the revelation of a confessional secret.

We understand that there are seventeen states which retain the common law rule under which no privilege is recognized covering communication between patient and physician. Other states respect the privileged communication, and consider the doctor liable when he reveals such information to a third party.[1]

Isolated cases concerning the relationship of the law and privileged communication between the ministerial counselor and his counselee seem to indicate a great deal of variance in statute and interpretation in the various states. An Episcopal priest in Texas, who held to the seal of the confessional, was placed in contempt of court and sent to prison. Likewise, "A Lutheran minister in the State of Minnesota was held in contempt of court and sentenced to a fine of $100 or to serve thirty days in jail because he refused to divulge a confessional secret; however, the Supreme Court, to which the case was appealed, sustained the pastor."[2] Nevertheless, in the majority of the cases which have reached the courts, the clergy have been upheld in their desire to keep professional information confidential.

Under present circumstances if someone confesses to our

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[1] Iago Galdston, On the Psychology of Medical Ethics, p.1ff

[2] John H.C. Fritz, Pastoral Theology, p. 136

Protestant clergy it is deemed prudent for them to know the civil law and interpretations in their respective commonwealths concerning privileged communications or to counsel with their lawyers. It is understood that if the minister appears in court an attempt will be made to determine his theology and denominational practices pertaining to privileged communication. However, even if he holds to the seal of confession this is no guarantee they will respect his convictions in all states.

In this respect a number of the men emphasized that our counseling ministries depend on the idea of secrecy if we are to be effective and maintain the absolute trust and confidence of our constituents. Certainly we do not see how the clergy could expect to assist their counselees if they cannot say to them, in essence, "You can tell me everything about yourself. You don't have to worry about my telling anyone about what you have said." This concept must be part of the very basic structure of the chaplain/ministerial counselor-counselee relationship. Hippocrates, who lived over 2,000 years ago and is considered the Father of Medicine, emphasized this principle in his famous oath: "Whatsoever in the course of practice I see or hear (or even outside my practice in social intercourse) that ought never to be published abroad, I will not divulge, but consider such things to be holy secrets." The Principles of Medical Ethics of the American Medical

Association also seal the lips of the physician but in reality their present Code "ends with a Golden Rule of medicine, that the physician should "constantly behave towards others as he desires them to deal with him."[1] Certainly Christian charity demands that the minister go one step beyond this.

Therefore when the chaplain/ministerial counselor learns something which, if not revealed, he may be forced into a role for which he has not had proper training. For example, he may be placed in the tragic situation of trying to serve two loyalties which appear to be in conflict with each other; namely, his loyalty to his religious convictions; with their allegiance to the secrecy of confidential information in the counselee-counselor relationship and his loyalty as an American citizen to his country and its laws. We have no way of determining how frequently this dilemma or similar ones may occur in ministerial counseling, but we feel with our routine lives becoming increasingly and intensely more complex the chances are good that many clergymen may be faced with such problems some time during their ministerial experience. It was interesting to note that generally there was little evidence in the responses that these cases were improbable or even out of the realm of possibility.

We would like to discuss the divergence of opinions we received in response to the questionnaire. We feel that all

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[1]Principles of Medical Ethics of the American Medical Association.

the informants exhibited a deep concern for the counselee and a high degree of ethical responsibility. For anyone who might question this, the burden of proof would most decidely be on him.

We do not feel that we had a fair cross section and large enough sampling of chaplain/ministerial opinions from the various denominations included to decisively indicate specific differentiations in the various religious orientations. Nevertheless, the clergymen who represented the more liturgical denominations generally exhibited greater facility of understanding, greater consistency of practice, and greater specificity in the matters involving privileged communication and professional confidences. The clergymen who came from the more dogmatic and authoritarian denominations tended to be more directive, judgmental, categorically casuistical, less likely to suggest referal to allied professions and more frequent in their use of religious applications in their counseling practices.

On the other hand the representatives of the free church traditions tended to be more non-directive, less judgmental and willing to refer to other professions in their counseling practices.

The clergymen who indicated they had participated in clinical pastoral training programs tended to give more emphasis to the psychological aspects of counseling and

evidenced greater understanding, acceptance and perspective in their counseling procedures. Whereas the clergymen who did not have clinical pastoral training tended to give more emphasis to the religious aspects of counseling and evidenced less certainty in their counseling procedures.

As to the significance of length of time in the ministry and the amount of experience the gentlemen with the most longevity in the ministry and those with the greatest amount of experience tended to be more definite and precise in their replies.

We do not feel that because some of our colleagues believed it their ethical responsibility to do something about some of these matters, while others felt they had no responsibility, that some were ethical and others were not - just as one is not right and the other is not wrong.

These responses did indicate that there are equivocal questions in chaplain/ministerial counseling ethics. The reason for the diversity of opinion seemed to indicate a commonly understood fact that each clergyman's own ethical activity is determined by his moral and spiritual convictions, personality, training and experience. Therefore how temporally and eternally imperative it becomes for each individual clergyman to have the basis for his moral and ethical practices grounded in the will of God as we have it revealed to us in Christ. Not that he is to be denied his personal

freedom of judgement in a rigoristcand absolutistic manner but rather that he is to be personally set free in Christ in order that he might assist his counselees in like manner to be free. Bonhoffer has summed it up in these words, "The will of God, which became manifest and was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, embraces the whole of reality. One can gain access to this whole, without being torn asunder by its manifold variety, only in faith in Jesus Christ, 'in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily'[1] and 'by whom all things are reconciled, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven'[2] and whose body, the Church, is 'the fulness of him that filleth all in all'.[3] Faith in this Jesus Christ is the sole fountainhead of all good."[4]

"Thus Christian ethics as taught by Jesus is the true ethics. It holds fast to the distinction between nature and spirit; it recognizes in nature the broad field of moral action; it sees in the spirit, the free personality, the subject of moral conduct; and it accepts God's will as the only valid and universally binding norm."[5]

The fact that no procedure in counseling can be carried

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[1] Colossians 2:9; 1:19.

[2] Colossians 1:20.

[3] Ephesians 1:23.

[4] Bonhoffer, p. 78

[5] Reu, p. 33

out without ethics being involved also emphasizes the importance of further enlightenment on the subject. We wish to incorporate in our concluding remarks this recommendation which we feel was implied in many of the responses. There seemed to be a feeling that it would be most helpful for some of the men if there were more active committees on ethics in our churches to whom the chaplain/ministerial counselors could go with their problems. These committees could also provide valuable service in promoting discussions and assisting in the clarification and understanding of our ethical responsibilities.

There are many determinants for the success or the failure; the pleasure or the grief of the chaplain/ministerial counseling ministry. One of the most significant of these is the religious counselor's awareness or lack of awareness; proficiency or lack of proficiency in the conduct of the ethical responsibilities in his counseling ministry. Prudent, skillful and ethically responsible the work of the chaplain/ministerial counselor must be; yet without ardent, selfless devotion to his Lord and to his counselees his efforts will be faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null. A genuine self-sacrificing faith and love for Christ and for the individuals it is his privilege to serve, brings the maximum effectiveness and satisfaction to the chaplain/ministerial counselor.

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